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A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield

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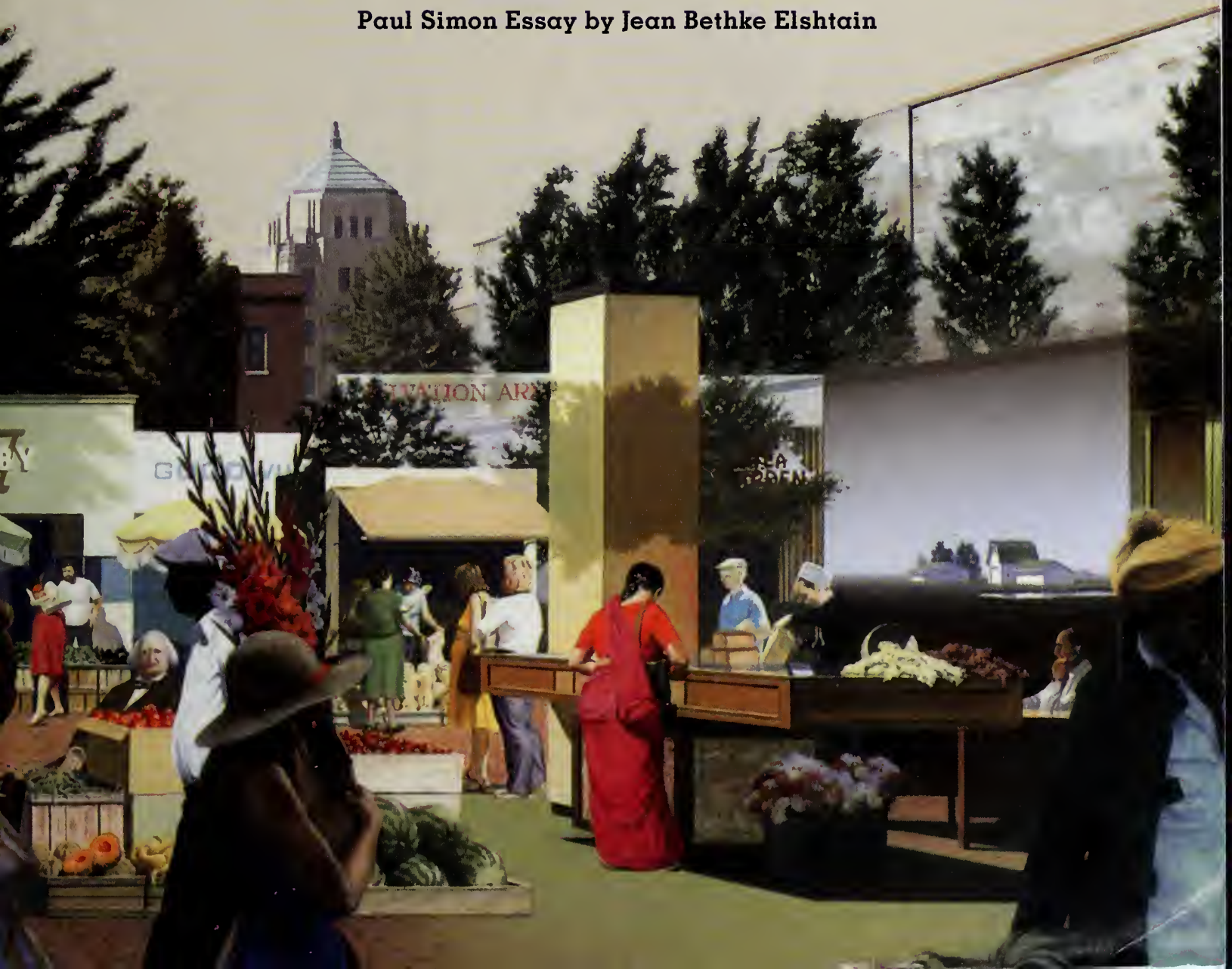
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CIVIC VIRTUES

*Moral imperatives grounded in religion
call us out of ourselves*

Paul Simon Essay by Jean Bethke Elshtain



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**"American civic life
is a moral imperative"**

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connections between political and ethical convictions.

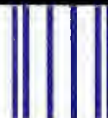
She also recognizes that promoting religion in public life is controversial. For many Americans, this raises the specter of theocracy. Maybe more so these days. But Elshtain addresses that

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In a sense, Morone and Elshtain are arguing for more of a certain kind of religion in our politics. Morone



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Peggy Boyer Long



"American civic life is a moral imperative"

by Peggy Boyer Long

Jean Bethke Elshtain argues that we need more religion in politics.

Her essay on this point is timely. And we expect it will be controversial. At least we hope so. We commissioned Elshtain, a political philosopher at the University of Chicago Divinity School, as *Illinois Issues*' first Paul Simon Essayist. Then we asked her to explore the underpinnings of our civic life.

This is an unusual subject for us. But Simon, one of this magazine's founders, had a deep interest in the relationship between ethics and public service. And, shortly after his death a little more than a year ago, our staff decided to honor him with an annual essay that looks at policy questions from a moral perspective. This first contribution, which establishes the frame for those to follow, was made possible by a grant from the Joyce Foundation.

Elshtain got into the spirit of the assignment easily. A public intellectual, she has focused her scholarship on the connections between political and ethical convictions.

She also recognizes that promoting religion in public life is controversial. For many Americans, this raises the specter of theocracy. Maybe more so these days. But Elshtain addresses that

***"This is not a matter
of blurring church and state.
Church and state are not
synonymous to religion
and politics. We keep
the first pair separate; we
put the second pair together
all of the time."***

Jean Bethke Elshtain

issue head on. "Without morality," she argues, "there would be no civil society as we have come to understand it." Further, regular church attenders tend to be more active in their communities. "The difference religiously derived morality makes is that it is more likely to get us up and out of the house and into civic life than the alternative of no religious connection or a very thin one."

More to the point, without a religiously grounded moral impulse, Americans would be in danger of sliding too far toward individualism.

That would endanger our civic life, and democracy itself.

There is, as Elshtain notes, a long history to this. Religious values have always been central in American politics. In fact, political scientist James Morone has written a history of the nation's political life that analyzes the dual nature of this tradition. Morone, too, argues that we need more religion in our politics. But *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History* posits a cyclical movement between neopuritanism — the impulse to control individual morality, especially other people's morality — and social gospel, the belief that we are our brother's keeper because we are our brother's brother.

Morone was on the campus of the University of Illinois at Springfield last month for a conference on politics and religion sponsored by the Center for State Policy and Leadership. He argued that, just as the religious right has gained sway in public life, the left has lost touch with its religious roots and retreated from communitarianism into the realm of private rights.

In a sense, Morone and Elshtain are arguing for more of a certain kind of religion in our politics. Morone

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supports the social gospel's idea of building a good community, and Elshtain supports a religiously based morality that promotes human dignity and worth.

She cites, for instance, the movement to abolish slavery. Today, stem cell research raises anew questions about human dignity and worth.

Such issues, Elshtain believes, should be debated in this context. "Civil

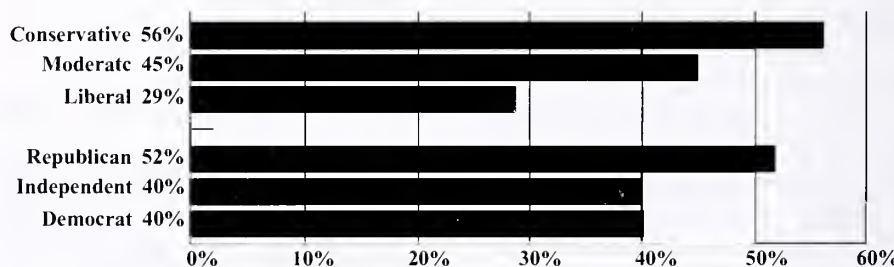
society," she writes, "cannot be a realm within which private interests masquerade as public concerns." Rather, "through participation in civil society we come to know a good in common that we cannot know alone." Religion empowers us, each and all. □

Peggy Boyer Long can be reached at peggyboy@aol.com.

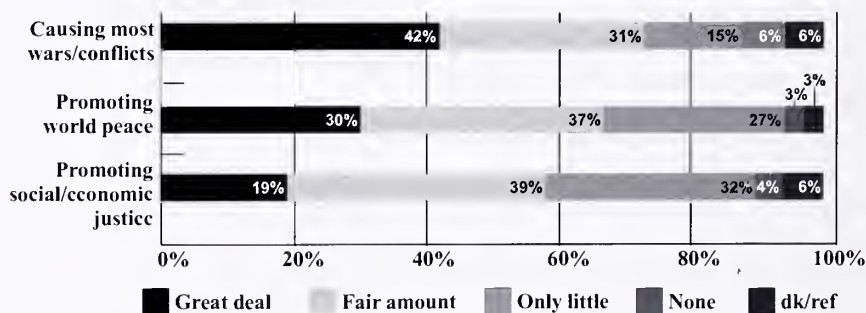
Poll shows Illinoisans think God is very important

Forty-three percent of Illinoisans surveyed in late March and early April said they attend religious services at least weekly. And weekly attendance is greater for those who live in midsize cities, are over the age of 60, are female and are nonwhite. Some 400 residents throughout the state spent an average of 30 minutes on the phone with interviewers from the Survey Research Office at the University of Illinois at Springfield. The poll, which had a margin of error of 5 percent, was presented last month during a policy summit about the relationship between politics and religion sponsored by the Center for State Policy and Leadership at the UIS campus.

Weekly attendance by ideological label and party identification



Attitudes about the role of religion in national and world affairs



Seventy-three percent of survey respondents told interviewers God is very important to their lives, while 53 percent rated religion as very important. And, by a margin of 50 percent to 38 percent, they said religion is increasing rather than losing influence on politics. But, according to the survey, Illinoisans do hold seemingly contradictory attitudes about the role of religion in public life. Respondents told interviewers religious institutions should take moral positions, but that it isn't acceptable for religious leaders to discuss politics from the pulpit. And they believe religious leaders shouldn't try to influence their votes or try to influence policymakers. The results of the entire survey are available at <http://cspl.uis.edu/surveyresearchoffice>.

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In one of the most scientifically based societies in history, the truth may go marching on, but facts stumble and fall.

Credits: Our cover illustration is a detail from Billy Morrow Jackson's mural Greater Downtown. That mural and Reflections in miniature appear in our cover story.

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Patrick J. Guinane



The governor has ruled out a tax hike so budgeteers will need to be creative

by Pat Guinane

Two contradictory pledges, more than anything else, have come to define Rod Blagojevich's tenure as governor. Since the campaign trail, the Chicago Democrat has promised he wouldn't hike income or sales taxes to erase the state deficit. And he wouldn't balance the budget by slashing spending on education, health care or public safety.

To his credit, Blagojevich has kept those promises. Amid multibillion dollar deficits, he has steered millions more into K-12 education while expanding health insurance coverage for poor families. But it has taken strenuous fiscal gymnastics to balance those commitments. And in dancing past a tax increase, the first-term governor has stepped on a lot of toes.

In his first two years, Blagojevich choreographed hundreds of small-scale budget maneuvers that, combined, moved state government along without harsh service cuts. And now, with the General Assembly's spring session in its final scheduled month, those strategies will be on display again.

There are a lot of ways to close a budget gap, but few make up as much ground as a general tax increase. And Illinois has leaned so heavily on the nickel-and-dime approach that the governor will need to recycle solutions used in the past two years.

A plan to restructure the state's obligation to public employee pension

There are a lot of ways to close a budget gap, but few make up as much ground as a general tax increase. And Illinois has leaned so heavily on the nickel-and-dime approach that the governor will need to recycle solutions used in the past two years.

systems represents the biggest crutch this year. Blagojevich wants to cut benefits for new hires and immediately credit \$800 million in long-term savings to the budget year that begins July 1. Because the governor wants to spend more money on education and health care, despite a deficit of \$1.1 billion, the pension plan is no small change.

But it's easily dwarfed by the \$2 billion in borrowed money Blagojevich spent in 2003, his first year in office. By issuing \$10 billion in pension bonds, he shifted a state debt to Wall Street. The pension systems are now investing the bond proceeds in the hope that the returns will eventually cover the \$2 billion Blagojevich spent up front.

Back then, the governor argued the state was deftly manipulating the bond market to come up with free money. This year, the cash will come from reining in what he says are overly generous pension benefits for workers who have yet to be hired and aren't likely to retire for decades.

It might sound confusing — borrowing from woefully underfunded pension systems and banking on savings from future employees. But the goal is clear: The state needs cash. As Blagojevich budget aides acknowledge, eliminating a multibillion-dollar state deficit is a multiyear task. They pegged the deficit at \$5 billion in 2003, half that last year and slightly more than \$1 billion now, on the eve of fiscal year 2006.

An income tax increase, such as the one school funding reform advocates are pushing this spring, could erase those deficits. For every half-point increase in the personal and corporate income tax — currently 3 percent and 4.8 percent respectively — the state could expect to realize about \$1.3 billion. But Blagojevich has ruled it out. So, the bigger the deficit, the more creative budget-makers will need to be.

In 2002, the National Association of State Budget Officers published a 12-page report called *Budget Shortfalls: Strategies for Closing Spending and Revenue Gaps*. It's a blueprint Illinois has used under Blagojevich. And the

state will continue to do so if lawmakers go along with the governor's budget proposal for the next fiscal year. Here are some of the main points they'll have to consider:

- **Pensions.** The association of budget officers says debt refinancing can allow states to take advantage of low interest rates, which is exactly how Blagojevich promoted the pension bond plan that handed him \$2 billion in operating cash. Reducing or suspending payments to state pension systems also is listed as an option by the association. But Illinois already ranks 49th among the 50 states in pension funding. So, looking ahead, Blagojevich wants to scale back costs instead by reducing benefits for future employees. Pension actuaries say the move will save only \$80.9 million next year, or one-tenth of what the governor wants to credit.

- **Fund transfers.** As the association of budget officers suggests, states can transfer money into their main checkbooks from dedicated funds — usually those supported by fees. Illinois lawmakers did this before Blagojevich, approving one-time transfers of \$165 million in former Gov. George Ryan's final year in office. Blagojevich has taken this strategy to a new level. Transfers brought in \$520 million last year, and half that in the current budget. In 2003, the legislature also began allowing the governor's budget chief to direct the comptroller and treasurer at any time to move money out of some 400 dedicated funds.

State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka, a prominent Republican and frequent Blagojevich critic, blocked \$78 million of those transfers this spring, arguing the legislature unconstitutionally ceded budgeting authority to the executive branch.

Blagojevich's budget for next year is built on even more fund shifts. Those flush with cash would forfeit much of their balances to an education endowment fund. The move is expected to generate \$420 million, which would be spent proportionally over three years.

- **Fee hikes.** Blagojevich used this solution to generate nearly \$320 million in 2003 and another \$35 million last year. The first-year hikes also generated headaches. Among the more than 300 fee hikes were higher registration costs for

Cutting spending is difficult, too, when education, health care and public safety are sacred cows.

truckers and a new wastewater disposal charge that hit cash-strapped local governments. Truckers and small towns applied enough political pressure to get their fees rolled back a bit last year. Further, the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce won an initial court decision over increased workers' compensation fees. That challenge is headed for the Illinois Supreme Court, with the chamber arguing the state gouged employers and spent the extra revenue on general expenses. Meanwhile, employers, insurers and even boat owners are paying more to do business in Illinois.

- **Sin taxes.** Also known as excise taxes, they allow government to take advantage of bad behavior. In 2003, for the second straight year, Illinois increased its cut from casino gambling. Riverboat admission fees were increased and the state ratcheted up the tax rate on casinos, taking 70 percent of annual revenues above \$250 million.

In Gov. Ryan's last year in office, lawmakers boosted the cigarette tax by 40 cents. And now Blagojevich wants to increase the state tax to \$1.73 a pack, a 75-cent hike that would finance his plan to build roads, schools and other capital construction projects.

The governor also would allow the state's nine riverboat casinos to double in size through an auction of new gambling positions he says would generate \$300 million for K-12 education.

Moral issues aside, smokers and gamblers aren't the most reliable sources of revenue. The last cigarette tax hike was supposed to net \$230 million but fell \$62 million short. And the higher casino taxes brought in less than half of the \$240 million estimate.

- **Corporate taxes.** Throughout the

years, lawmakers have complicated the tax code with special provisions intended to nurture one industry or another. Blagojevich convinced them to close \$323 million of these so-called loopholes in 2003 and another \$151 million last year. This year, he wants to make corporations pay a sales tax on prepackaged software, which could bring in \$65 million for the Chicago Transit Authority. Ending a tax break for electricity purchased from landfills could bring in \$17 million for conservation programs.

Along with those staples, Blagojevich has benefited from a federal windfall of \$780 million associated with President George W. Bush's tax cuts. And an amnesty period for state taxpayers brought in \$532 million last year. But Blagojevich has lost at least that much in projected cash after legal issues sunk plans to mortgage the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago and auction the state's dormant 10th casino license.

Cutting spending is difficult, too, when education, health care and public safety are sacred cows. Last month, the administration said it needs the legislature to approve another \$86 million in spending this year or workers in three state agencies might be forced into taking unpaid furloughs.

Along with most of state government, Human Services, Corrections and Aging had their budgets cut last summer when bipartisan negotiations plunged the legislature into a record 54 days of overtime. While hiking fees or closing so-called corporate loopholes might not be as painful as a general tax increase, together they can add up to frustration for affected parties. That's essentially the assessment Chicago Democratic House Speaker Michael Madigan gave last year after allowing his members to reject \$300 million in corporate tax hikes proposed by Blagojevich.

Lawmakers have the next few weeks to respond to the governor's alternatives to tax hikes. But without some fiscal maneuvers, it will be nearly impossible for Blagojevich to deliver on promises to provide schools with \$440 million in new money and extend health insurance to 74,000 additional working parents. □

Pat Guinane can be reached at capitolbureau@aol.com.

BRIEFLY

Photographs courtesy of the North Park Press

RELIGION AND POLITICS

Backers see housing as a moral issue

Bundled in bedspreads and cardboard houses, dozens of tomorrow's clergy and community leaders lie in the streets of Chicago. The scene isn't that of a religious awakening among the homeless, but a sign of a social revival nonetheless.

Eighty students joined Tim King, a North Park University biblical studies major, in a Michigan Avenue "sleep out" designed to raise awareness about homelessness. By going homeless for one February night this year, the students from the university founded by the Evangelical Covenant Church hoped to increase publicity for what many faith-based advocates are calling "an affordable housing crisis."

This form of faith-based advocacy isn't new to Illinois politics, but clergy who don't identify with the "religious right" have heard a call to action. Spawned by post-election prophets and dejected evangelical Democrats, progressive organizations are reframing social justice as a moral mandate.

"There is more than one way to think about moral issues," says the Rev. Jennifer Kottler of Protestants for the Common Good. "Our focus is more on poverty and economic justice."

Poking out of the front pocket of her bag is the sacred text of this social revival, Jim Wallis' *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*. In his book, Wallis calls on conservatives to move past single-issue voting on abortion and gay marriage, while challenging them to embrace a biblical mandate for social justice.

Kottler quotes Wallis when she asserts, "If faith groups can't agree on anything else, they ought to be able to agree on doing something about poverty."

This "call to care" approach is expressed by Protestants for the Common Good in advocacy for affordable and adequate housing. The group's legislative agenda includes promoting the Source of Income Protection Amendment to the Illinois Human Rights Act. The measure would protect individuals from discrimination based on source of income, including federal Section 8 housing vouchers.

Other groups such as the Lutheran Network for Justice Advocacy joined them. "Just about every community I go into, whether it is urban, suburban, small town or rural, one of the common issues that is raised by folks is the need for decent affordable housing," says Dan Schwick, executive director of the Lutheran Network. These advocates argue that Illinois' shortage of affordable housing is unacceptable to a society claiming justice for all.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, a full-time worker must earn an hourly wage of \$15.44 to afford a two-bedroom unit at Illinois' fair market rent of \$803 per month. And workers earning \$6.50 would have to clock in 95



Students gather on Michigan Avenue to protest a shortage of affordable housing.

hours a week to cover that cost. More than 400,000 Illinois families spend more than half of their income on rent, according to Chicago-based Work, Welfare and Families.

Efforts to improve the situation are not just the aim of Protestant and Roman Catholic advocacy groups. "Moral codes from diverse religious and cultural heritages agree that societies should be judged on the way they care for the most vulnerable in the society," says Schwick.

Interfaith Open Communities, an organization made up of Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim congregations, also seeks to remedy the need for rental housing in Chicago. Interfaith is joining other faith-based groups in supporting the state Rental Housing Support Program Act, which was passed by the Senate. The measure would create a program that would pay subsidies to landlords who provide affordable rents to those earning less than 30 percent of the area median income. It also would provide operating grants for new and rehabbed housing developments for low-income families.

King, the sleep-out organizer, says that as a result of the rally, 6,000 petitioners have signed a "Declaration Against Poverty and Covenant for the Common Good." The document asks lawmakers to give more attention to homelessness, affordable housing and opportunities for home ownership.

After returning from a spring trip to Washington, D.C., where he presented the petitions to Sens. Richard Durbin and Barack Obama, King headed to Springfield. North Park students joined other advocates last month in a lobby day organized by the Statewide Housing Action Coalition. They didn't sleep on the streets that time, but they believe they reminded lawmakers that the intersection of faith and politics isn't always about bedroom policy. And they challenged Illinoisans to recognize the moral value of fighting poverty.

Rikeesha Cannon

For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

Legislative checklist

The General Assembly has a few weeks yet to wrestle with a deficit of at least \$1.1 billion for the fiscal year that begins July 1. Adjournment is scheduled for May 27, and Gov. Rod Blagojevich still must convince lawmakers to go along with plans to cut pension benefits for future public employees, tap hundreds of special purpose funds and let existing Illinois casinos double in size. If the Democrat-controlled legislature doesn't agree by May 31, approving a state budget will require a three-fifths majority, thus dragging Republicans into the debate. Last year, negotiators crunched numbers into July before finding common ground.

Guns

Gun-control advocates lost another battle in the House when a measure allowing gun-crime victims to sue gun dealers over illegal or negligent sales fell 12 votes short of passage.

Meanwhile, the House approved legislation to establish training courses retired police officers need to be allowed to carry concealed weapons under federal legislation enacted last year.

Servitude

Individuals who force immigrants and other victims into servitude and the sex trade would face a range of felony charges under legislation approved by the House. Proponents say the measure would make it easier for prosecutors to break international human trafficking rings that they contend would bring at least 18,000 victims into this country each year. A 2004 *New York Times* magazine article labeled Chicago a center for this illegal activity.

Nurses

Health care officials are squaring off over legislation that would create a new class of "medical technicians" to dispense medication to nursing home residents. Illinois nurses argue such a move would increase medical error rates and mean more work for them in overseeing

such assistants. But representatives of the state's long-term care facilities say creating the entry-level position would ease nurses' burdens. They say their proposal mirrors practices in 30 other states. The measure passed the House and is in the Senate.

Meth

Both chambers advanced proposals to prevent and punish users of the illegal drug methamphetamine.

The House approved one measure that would create a statewide system of drug courts to relieve burdens on local criminal courts and to put the emphasis on rehabilitation rather than incarceration. The measure has a \$10 million price tag and no funding source.

Representatives also want to boost research that might make anhydrous ammonia useless in meth production. They hope to render the volatile farm fertilizer chemically inert after it has been stolen from an outdoor tank. And they want to give local officials greater assistance in cleaning up chemicals left behind in clandestine meth labs.

Meanwhile, the Senate approved an initiative promoted by Attorney General Lisa Madigan that would reorganize the state's criminal code, placing all meth-related statutes under one section.

Autism

Parents of autistic children brought their families to the Capitol last month in a show of support for efforts to boost research on the developmental disability. According to national estimates, one in 166 children have autism, a lifelong disorder that can seriously impair social interaction and communication skills.

A House measure would establish a state income tax check-off for research while a Senate bill would create a statewide database on those diagnosed with autism.

The State Board of Education would administer a program to study the disorder and provide educators with teacher training grants under one Senate proposal. It awaits a vote in the House.

Phones

Gov. Rod Blagojevich wants legislation that would force companies

providing Internet-based phone services to ensure customers have access to local 911 centers. The emergence of Voice over Internet Protocol providers is just one segment of the industry legislators are taking a look at this session as they decide whether to renew or rewrite the state's telecommunications law, which expires in June.

Voting

Voters could head to the polls in the three weeks prior to Election Day under legislation approved by the Senate. Supporters say the extended opportunity could increase turnout.

Courts

Eight northern Illinois counties will be divided into judicial subcircuits under a bill signed into law last month. Democrats began pushing the plan in January, arguing the move would increase the number of minorities on the bench in Boone, DeKalb, Kane, Kendall, Lake McHenry, Will and Winnebago counties. Republicans led a similar effort that subdivided Cook County judicial districts in 1989. Judges are elected countywide elsewhere.

Fireworks

Gov. Blagojevich vetoed legislation that would have made it easier for some Illinoisans to get their hands on firecrackers, bottle rockets and other "Class C" fireworks. Macon and Sangamon counties in central Illinois interpret state law in a way that allows them to sell those fireworks to citizens who pay a nominal permit fee.

Two years ago, the legislature gave the State Fire Marshal's Office greater authority over the permit process and began requiring temporary insurance policies for backyard displays. Republicans sought to repeal those changes, but the governor decided to keep them in place, citing safety concerns.

Paige E. Wassel

IMMIGRATION STORIES

Earlier this year, 15 students in Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism set out to report and write immigration stories that have not been covered by the professional media. They were directed by Assistant Professor Michele Weldon and Greg Stephan, an adjunct lecturer.

What follows are edited excerpts from a few of the students' profiles, which we are publishing with their permission.

Quoc-Phong Nguyenle

Quoc-Phong Nguyenle moves quickly between a bustling kitchen, register and customers at To Pho Café in Chicago's Loop. Nestled under a green awning, the café brings a tropical feel to an otherwise gray city block of Wabash Avenue near Madison Street. Nguyenle, who is owner and manager, has a decorated resumé that includes a 1999 Harvard law degree.

Nguyenle gave up his law career to support a dream his mother and sister shared of opening a restaurant in the United States. He had practiced for more than a year in Boston before his family convinced him to open the restaurant in Chicago.

"I could have 20 Ph.D.s and I'd still have to listen to my sister. If your sister's [older] than you, you need to listen to her — period. Confucianism is the foundation of culture in Vietnam," says Nguyenle. "You have to listen to your elder."

Born in 1971, Nguyenle lived in South Vietnam until he was 8 years old. His father, Than Nguyenle, was a high-ranked American military officer. He had received schooling and military training in the United States, though he lived in Vietnam the majority of his life before the war.

But the fall of Saigon in 1975 marked the end of Nguyenle's safety in Vietnam. "You're constantly in danger as an officer's family," says Nguyenle. "We were constantly running around Vietnam to avoid capture."

Nguyenle's father had been placed in a Communist concentration camp in

1977 and was left behind. He wasn't released until 1989.

Nguyenle's mother, Bickngoc, made eight attempts to buy boat transportation out of Vietnam. Once, she and her four children snuck onto a boat of more than 40 Vietnamese refugees. But the captain abandoned the passengers before the boat left Saigon Port.

"We were stranded on the ocean for eight days," says Nguyenle. "As an 8-year-old, it was an adventure. It was fun. As far as everyone else was concerned, it was a scary situation."

Without a navigator, the ship was guided by Nguyenle's older brother, then 13, with little direction and little success. "We were fortunate because a ship found us and pointed us in the right direction toward Indonesia," says Nguyenle.

The family stayed in Indonesia for more than two months until the United Nations could connect them with relatives in the United States. Nguyenle's family arrived at his aunt's home in Houston in 1979. The Nguyens would later move to the Midwest and the West Coast in Bickngoc's pursuit of the best education for her children.

Mike Laskasky

Janette Colon

Janette Colon says her St. Augustine College degree gives her more pride than any lavish possession could. "That's why my life changed," says Colon, who left the U.S. Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, in 1987 when she was 17.

She and her two oldest children initially settled in New York, where Colon found work as a grocery store cashier. "When customers came, I could only say, 'Good morning.' I couldn't even have a whole conversation." She says language created other problems. "I didn't know what train I had to take," Colon says. "I had to ask police for directions and make signs. It was hard."

She had two daughters while living in New York, and then relocated to the North Side of Chicago, where her parents already lived. Colon's father found her an apartment and offered advice. "He told me I had to do something for my

kids. So I went to college." After enrolling at bilingual St. Augustine College in 1995, Colon found a job in the Chicago college's offices. When she received her associate's degree four years later, she took a job as a financial aid assistant at St. Augustine.

In 2002, she bought a five-bedroom house in west suburban Cicero. "I had to show my kids that everybody can do it. That to improve, you have to study hard and be in school.

"When I finish my bachelor's, I plan to earn more money," Colon says. "I also want to see my kids in college, getting married and having their own lives. That's my goal. And when they are good, I can say, 'Okay, I'm done.'"

Her daughter, Suheidy Pons, 19, is now a sophomore at St. Augustine, majoring in business administration. And she has a daughter and a home of her own.

Pons says, "I know that I have to be independent, that this world is not easy. That there are a lot of things that I'm going to have to go through, negative things, positive things. That you have to work. That you have to stay in school. I just know to never give up, to keep trying and trying."

*Ryan Wenzel
Melanie Wong*

Alexandra Shakhnazarova

Alexandra Shakhnazarova landed in Chicago from Moscow earlier this year and has moved with her two daughters into a one-bedroom apartment. The family lives in a red, three-story building in Albany Park, a diverse part of Chicago where many Asian, Hispanic and Eastern European immigrants settle.

Shakhnazarova and her daughters, Viola and Elena, came to the United States through a program with World Relief, an international organization that helps refugees resettle in the United States by providing housing and job assistance.

Though the whole family was born in Baku, Azerbaijan, they are Armenian. In 1988, they left Azerbaijan because of persecution, and Shakhnazarova says she began living in Moscow in 1991,

but did not reject her refugee status and accept a Russian passport until 1999.

Shakhnazarova and her daughters received permission and exit Russian passports. But her son Mikhail's trip had to be delayed because his citizenship status was unclear and there were no military records. Shakhnazarova brought all of her paperwork, carefully stored in individual plastic bags, to the United States. "I have all the documents here," Shakhnazarova says. "I thought they wouldn't give him the foreign passport, and that I would have to fight from here."

She and her family brought few other personal items to the United States, only books, dolls and clothes. She says the books took up a lot of the weight — 70 pounds total.

Shakhnazarova says she didn't know how to use a phone card, so she went out on the street to ask. Muscovites are kind, but they are always in a hurry, she says. But here, a man stopped and spent time with her until she finally made an international call with the card. "By our faces, you could tell that it was our first day," Shakhnazarova says. "I will ask anything; I'm not ashamed."

Elena says she thinks life in the United States will be difficult. "You think that everything will be like in a fairy tale, but there are the same problems. Only it's a different place, different language. We need to learn the language — you can't do it without money and a job. We lived badly in Armenia, and in Russia. And here, we're only beginning to live."

But, Shakhnazarova says, she was successful on one of her first few days in Chicago when she asked passers-by about directions to any church. She found one in Evanston — the Vineyard Christian Church on Howard. "We already have friends there." Shakhnazarova shows off the letters and a CD of hymns she received from the church.

She explains that arrival of the mail illustrates one important thing. "Life goes on."

Sveta Trivino

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Study looks at the role of immigrant churches

Photograph courtesy of the Immigrant Voting Project



Increased numbers of non-Protestant civic engagement projects may signal that immigrant congregations are in a better position to influence political and cultural changes.

Investigators at the Religion, Immigration and Civil Society in Chicago Project are researching how and why immigrant congregations engage in the community. With \$600,000 from the Pew Charitable Trust Gateway Cities Initiative, researchers at the McNamara Center for the Social Study of Religion at Loyola are mapping religious diversity through ethnographic studies in 17 congregations representing seven major religious groups in the Chicago area.

The team recently completed a three-year study and is compiling the final results.

"The Protestant influence is well-established in this country, and [that] won't be [over]turned in the near future, but immigrant congregations are forging more multicultural conversations within the community," says Fred Kniss, a Loyola sociology professor who is one of two principal investigators for the project.

One of the emerging themes of this research is that religious identity is a primary factor in civic engagement among immigrant communities. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 19.8 percent of the residents in Cook County are foreign-born. And previous studies show that these immigrants are less likely to identify with Protestantism than native-born populations. In 2004, the University of Chicago released *The Vanishing Protestant Majority*. According to that study, new immigrants make up only 24.5 percent of mainline Christian denominations. The authors also predict that increased immigration will further decrease Protestant dominance.

Synagogues, temples and mosques provide the social and civic connections necessary for integration into the community. These congregations are research models on how new immigrants can be fully integrated into the community.

Research sites participating in the study on Religion, Immigration and Civil Society include Hindu temples with charitable outreach and suburban mosques that provide leadership for Chicago Islamic organizations. A city synagogue provides services for jobs, counseling and housing for new immigrants.

Because religion is often a component of social identity and culture, congregations are providing the moral sanction for immigrant engagement in the community. And this changing demographic in the religious community may challenge the dominant Anglo-Protestant perspective on culture and policy.

Kniss and fellow Loyola sociologist Paul Numrich, the other principal investigator at the project, want the study to become a vehicle to educate the public on the new face of religious pluralism in the community. "There's a huge societal change in perception," Numrich said in a release. "Whether or not there's acceptance is another thing. But everyone has admitted that the new diversity is here to stay."

Rikeesha Cannon

States move to close gaps

Fewer are experiencing gaps in spending and revenue, but the states continue to struggle, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Survey results showed that only three states had holes in their current fiscal year budgets, which is a big improvement over the previous two years — 10 and 31, respectively. Though Illinois was not among those three, about the time the survey results hit the streets Gov. Rod Blagojevich sought approval for an \$86 million short-term spending bill.

Though Illinois began to experience economic recovery in 2004, this state is still facing a deficit in which ongoing expenses outpace revenues. The governor's proposed \$53 billion budget for fiscal year 2006 projects a \$1.1 billion gap.

The national conference estimates the proposed federal budget will shift \$30 billion in costs from the federal to state governments.

RELAPSE Illinois now feels the fiscal symptoms of the flu season

Ecosse Hospital Products Ltd., a British wholesaler, is suing the state for refusing to pay for nearly \$2.6 million in flu shots it ordered but never received. Last winter, amid a national shortage, Gov. Rod Blagojevich ordered 254,250 doses without approval to import them from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

State Comptroller Dan Hynes refuses to pay for the undelivered vaccine, citing a clause in the Ecosse contract that he says protects the state from unforeseen circumstances, including government regulation.

Meanwhile, many local health departments had trouble unloading the supplies they already had after the federal government urged citizens to save the shots for vulnerable groups.

Pat Guinane

PLACE YOUR BETS

Bigger casinos, more casinos or no casinos

After hedging his position for two years, Gov. Rod Blagojevich has offered a plan that would double the size of casino gambling in Illinois without, he argues, expanding its scope. A year ago, Blagojevich rejected a major gambling expansion package, even evoking a popular Las Vegas lounge act to explain that he didn't want to turn the Land of Lincoln into the Land of Wayne Newton. That proposal would have tripled gaming in Illinois, paving the way for a land-based, city-owned casino in downtown Chicago.

This spring, the governor, a Chicago Democrat, wants lawmakers to double the number of table games and video slot machines on the nine riverboat casinos already operating in Illinois. Currently, each boat is allowed up to 1,200 gaming positions. Owners would have to bid on the new positions through an auction that Blagojevich says would bring in \$300 million for the state to spend on elementary and secondary education. However, as a candidate for governor in 2002, Blagojevich signed a survey pledging to oppose gambling expansion efforts, including those that would add positions at existing casinos. As governor, Blagojevich has said he would consider gambling proposals that are limited in scope, but until now he had not endorsed any specific expansion. He says his plan is palatable because it would not bring casino gambling to communities where it does not already exist.

"You know, we have our plan and he has his," says Senate President Emil Jones, a Chicago Democrat. Jones is again pushing for a Chicago casino and two more for the suburbs. His plan also would allow existing riverboats to double in size. And it would give the boats a break on the annual taxes they pay, which currently top out at 70 percent for revenue above \$250 million. The industry says that rate must be rolled back to 50 percent before it would have any interest in the extra positions Blagojevich is offering. The governor's budget, however, banks on the 70 percent rate.

Chicago Mayor Richard Daley seemed to offer Blagojevich some leeway last month, saying a city casino wasn't a priority as long as the state could come up with an infusion of cash for city schools and the beleaguered Chicago Transit Authority. The agency approved a harsh mix of service cuts and fee hikes it plans to implement this summer, barring a bailout from Springfield.

And, while the Senate and the governor talk gambling expansion, the House flirted with abolition. That chamber ultimately ignored a measure that would board up the riverboats already operating in Illinois, which in turn would blow a hole of roughly \$700 million in the state budget for next fiscal year, which begins in July. *Pat Guinane*

Photograph by Paige E. Wassel



AIDS advocates rally at the state Capitol on policy initiatives related to the disease.

GAMBLES FOR EDUCATION

Larger casinos could fund school hike

The hunt for education dollars has turned over some familiar proposals this spring, including those to swap taxes, tap special funds and expand gambling.

Most surprising was Gov. Rod Blagojevich's announcement in late March that he would allow the state's nine riverboats to double the number of slot machines and card tables on deck. He estimates that auctioning the additional positions to casino owners could generate \$300 million for schools.

He also wants to siphon \$140 million from some 350 special purpose funds, giving elementary and secondary schools a slightly larger amount than in the past two years.

In the next fiscal year, which begins July 1, the governor suggests using \$380 million of the new money to boost the state's minimum education guarantee by \$250 per pupil, bringing the so-called foundation level to \$5,214. The Education Funding Advisory Board, which was appointed by Blagojevich, recently recommended that the foundation level — a mix of local, state and federal dollars — be increased to \$6,405 to ensure an adequate education for all Illinois students.

Early childhood education would receive \$30 million more under the governor's proposal.

Most of the remaining increase is aimed at improving high school standards. By 2012, the plan would require students to take an additional year of math, science and English. The total number of credits needed to graduate would increase from 16 to 18. And the governor would designate \$20 million for vocational training and advanced placement courses that give high school students a chance to earn college credits.

Top education advocates in the House and Senate say the higher standards warrant consideration, though they contend most school districts already enforce more extensive math and science requirements.

As for financing the plan, some say relying on gambling and a 75-cent cigarette tax increase — the latter to support the governor's \$550 million school construction plan — sends the wrong message.

"I mean, all those things we try in schools to tell kids that they really need to stay away from, and we're funding our schools with it?" says Republican Rep. Roger Eddy, the school superintendent of Hutsonville in east central Illinois. He wasn't in the legislature three decades ago when state officials launched the Illinois Lottery and billed it as a future windfall for education.

The more demanding high school standards Blagojevich proposes mirror a plan pushed by Sen. Miguel del Valle, a Chicago Democrat who chairs his chamber's education committee. He wants the governor to embrace Senate Bill 750, a much more expansive funding proposal that would reduce reliance on local property taxes by increasing the personal income tax from 3 percent to 5 percent and by boosting the corporate income tax from 4.8 percent to 8 percent. While offering homeowners a 25 percent property tax reduction, the plan would, for the first time, expand the sales tax to include haircuts and other services to bring in \$1.5 billion.

Supporters say the tax swap would generate \$7.3 billion overall, with nearly \$1.7 billion earmarked for elementary and secondary education. That's enough to increase the foundation level by \$1,128 to a total of \$6,092 per pupil.

The plan earmarks \$2.4 billion for property tax relief while setting aside \$2 billion for general state spending and \$400 million for higher education.

Supporters released a poll last month showing 69 percent of 600 likely voters supporting the tax swap. The poll, paid for by the Service Employees International Union and the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, a liberal-leaning Chicago think tank, had a four-point margin of error. Respondents were told the school spending increase "would be funded by expanding the sales tax to cover consumer services and [through] a 2 percent increase in income taxes for the top 40 percent of income earners."

Opponents argue participants should have been asked whether they support a 67 percent income tax increase for individuals earning more than \$52,000 a year. Those making less would split \$900 million in income tax refunds.

The governor remains firmly set against any income or sales tax hike, lending a theoretical air to the tax-swap talk.

Paige E. Wassel



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CIVIC VIRTUES

*Moral imperatives grounded in religion call us
to come to know a good in common we cannot know alone*

by Jean Bethke Elshtain

Illustrations by Billy Morrow Jackson

Civil society is on the tips of many tongues these days. This shouldn't surprise us — not in the American democracy. American civic life was not lopsidedly state-centered, as in Europe, but more dispersed, more open to citizens within the purview of their particular communities.

When we speak of civil society, we call to mind that world of associational enthusiasm that so enchanted Alexis de Tocqueville when he toured the fledgling republic during the Jacksonian era.

Tocqueville observed something new under the political sun — a world of civic engagement that was neither officially governmental, nor specifically economic. Civil society, then, is neither work life nor structures of governance but, rather, the many-sided world of churches, voluntary organizations of every sort, community networks, far-flung national efforts with local affiliates, and on and on.

Moral norms and notions are interlaced with civil society; indeed, people propel themselves into community and organizational life because there are things they care about, values they endorse, goods they embrace. Without

morality, there would be no civil society as we have come to understand it.

Nearly a decade ago, I chaired a Council on Civil Society that produced a report titled *A Call to Civil Society* that was released to the nation at large. Our council was composed of a bipartisan group of distinguished citizens from many walks of life: law, politics, the professoriate, community organizing, mothers' organizations, the clergy, business and labor. The premise that underwrote and framed all our thinking was a profound yet

simple one: American civic life is a moral imperative.

Some critics took strong exception to our findings and our claim. "No," they declared, in so many words, "civil life is about economic interest or power, about who gets what, when and how." Some even suggested that we had knowingly steered the discussion away from "structural constraints" to the ground of "personal morality" because we had not wanted to tackle the power and income disparities in American life.

But the ground of morality is where Americans have always engaged politics. Think of abolitionism, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, dozens of peace and justice organizations.

There is a long history to all of this, for American civic life from its inception was premised on the complex intermingling of moral and civic imperatives. If you re-read the papers, pronouncements, declarations and letters of our founders, the moral tone is inescapable. Even those, like Thomas Jefferson, who were not traditional Christians (though the vast

The Paul Simon Essay

We are pleased to publish *Illinois Issues*' first Paul Simon Essay. And we are grateful for the generous support of the Joyce Foundation, which made possible this first contribution by political philosopher Jean Bethke Elshtain of the University of Chicago Divinity School.

Our goal in commissioning these annual essays will be to find new ways to frame policy questions.

One of the magazine's founders, Simon had a deep interest in the moral and ethical dimensions of a wide range of issues. Though the magazine's mission has always been to publish in-depth analyses of policy questions, we have never consistently approached policy from an ethical or moral perspective. But these essays will be distinct in that they will take clear positions about the state's collective responsibilities. And this theme will be the thread that ties the project together over the years.

We begin this month by exploring the moral imperatives of American civic life. This is a subject that interested Simon, who, before his death a little more than a year ago, devoted his life to public service.

majority were), spoke of “nature and nature’s God” and about the divine providence involved in America’s coming-to-be. They had no doubt that the American project was a moral as well as a civil experiment.

With what many have called the refounding of our nation during the Civil War, the tone of America as a moral project grew ever more explicit and profound. In his great *Second Inaugural*, a masterpiece of brilliant prose and economy, Abraham Lincoln evokes God no fewer than 14 times — this is an address that is only a few pages in length. So the critics really didn’t have a leg to stand on when they complained that we were somehow substituting “morality” for “politics.” In America, you cannot separate the two. So powerful was this intermingling that Lincoln could refer to the high-mystic ties of brotherhood that linked us to our fellow citizens.

In my book about the horrible events of 9/11 and our reaction to it, I wrote of the poignant and profound “civic fellowship” that we, as citizens, experienced in relation to all our fellow Americans as we identified with one another and, most especially, the bereaved families of the murdered innocent.

To be sure, there are many foreign critics, as well as the domestic ones I have noted, that either cavil at the American connection of the moral and the political, or fail to understand it at all. For example, there are foreign critics who see the hand of a crude would-be theocracy lurking just beneath the surface of the moral pronouncements of our political leaders, Democrats and Republicans. Critics do not appear to appreciate that, were one to yank the moral imperatives out of American civic life, historically and currently, there would be very little left. And critics often fail to understand that one of the most cherished values of many who interject morality into political debate is the free exercise of religion. No one wants a theocracy. But citizens have always sought ways to embody certain cherished norms in political life.

Consider but a few of the moral civic projects or civically moral projects of the American past. The quest for independence itself was construed in

moral terms. This wasn’t just a power grab by a few agitators on the eastern seaboard. No, in the hearts and minds of those making the case for revolution, a deep moral ethic, grounded in a providential understanding of history, lay in the American appeals for, and claims to, independence. The rights of American colonials as Englishmen were being abridged, to be sure. But more, much more, than that. Our God-created and sustained liberties also were being violated by the English king.

The colonists launched what, in the writings of political philosopher John Locke, an influential figure to our founders, was called “the appeal to Heaven.” By this, Locke meant that, were political remedies unavailable to deal with egregious and continuing violations, a people could, in extremis, make their “appeal to Heaven.” That meant they articulated clearly their grievances before God and man; they demonstrated the ways in which a political and civic standing grounded in our very

natures was under assault. In political statements, the rebels declared their allegiance to certain universal laws of nature, good for all time and all places. And God was the author of these laws.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, a number of convulsive social and political movements forged powerful links between religious faith, morality and desired political ends. I have already noted abolitionism, the temperance movement spearheaded by the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. None is understandable outside an appreciation of the moral imperatives for civic engagement each entailed.

Abolitionism and women’s suffrage drew upon biblically derived norms to critique what amounted to systematic assaults on those norms. In cases of such conflict, we are obliged to obey the “higher law” rather than the flawed and unjust laws of man — so went the argument. Slavery denied the moral equality of all persons in the eyes of



God, and the presumptions concerning decent or ill treatment that flowed from that equality. Separating women from the franchise, consigning them to second-class citizenship based on gender alone, thus to a noncivic status in a full-fledged sense, raised deep moral questions of political morality.

The third movement on my list — temperance — is in a rather bad odor these days. We see it as an example of narrow moralism rather than acceptable morality. But to the vast armies of women who were soldiers in the temperance movement, excessive drink was directly responsible for the ruination of families and the catastrophes that flowed from that. Whether one finds temperance arguments persuadable or prudent is, of course, a long-debated matter. But it would be patently absurd to refuse to see the robust link between morality and politics in this, and so many other broad-based movements for civic and social transformation.

On the smaller scale, in thousands

of communities nationwide, citizens, including the hundreds of thousands of women who could not yet vote but were engaged in a plethora of civic activities nonetheless, did the hard work of building and sustaining decent communities on the basis of deeply cherished moral imperatives — most often derived from their faith. From the beginning and since, religious faith mutually engaged with and helped to constitute political life.

The skeptic might grant this much but then go on to argue that “that was then, this is now.” They would then go on to describe “now” as a period when there is no workable civic consensus on nearly all politically and morally fraught matters; when we are a vastly different and religiously pluralistic nation where once we were more uniform; when the necessary civic projects can be undertaken most effectively in the absence of religious or moral influence. They see religion as encouraging obstreperousness and dogmatism, as a way to try to “shove things down people’s throats.” Since

morality in America most often derives from religion, it follows, to these skeptics, that we are better off without either as far as the civic world is concerned. Other critics might not go that far but would say that they aren’t against morality — they just think it belongs in private life and should not be a central part of civic life, for to involve it is an inappropriate mingling of church and state.

Such criticisms are rather easily answered, I think. All one need do is point to the many dogmatisms favored by self-declared secularists to demonstrate that dogmatism and religiously based morality are not synonyms. There is plenty of dogmatism — from time to time — to go around.

One might then go on to show how ordinary American politics would come to a dead halt were morality to be stripped away, for Americans think of their lives and the lives of their communities in inescapably moral terms. To insist that persons of faith with moral convictions are obliged to cast aside those beliefs when they enter into a political dispute is to unfairly saddle about 80 percent (or more) of the American public with an unfair and draconian burden.

This is not a matter of blurring church and state. Church and state are not synonymous to religion and politics. We keep the first pair separate; we put the second pair together all of the time.

In the *Call to Civil Society* we reminded readers that America is unique in being a polity knowingly brought into being on the basis of a cluster of universal moral propositions. It is overwhelmingly the case that much of our civic life has been involved in trying to bring our practices into greater harmony with our principles. If we truly believe that our liberty and dignity come from God, what political implications flow from that? If we truly believe that we cannot have decent politics absent a sturdy moral compass, what difference does it make? Every reader can answer the first of these two questions for himself or herself, for we have seen the answers work themselves out in our history in and through the movements I have already noted — and more.

Think again of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the moral-



political fight for integration. Think of a variety of ethical responses to war and war-making. Think of concerns with Third World poverty or the AIDS crisis or just about any major global problem to find moral voices crying out. So the first question finds ready answers.

The second question is a bit more difficult. What difference does it make? Do we really need God-talk if we have rights-talk? For God-talk at least as much as rights-talk is the way America has spoken and continues to speak, to a remarkable extent. I see the difference working itself out in a number of ways.

First, we know from the most reliable social science data and evidence that persons who attend church regularly are far more likely to be active participants in their communities on the civic level than those who have little or no connection to religion. So there is an empirical dimension available to us. The difference religiously derived morality makes is that it is more likely to get us up and out of the house and into civic life than the alternative of no religious connection or a very thin one.

Second, those engaged in civic life on the basis of moral imperatives are more likely to articulate reasons for engagement that go beyond self-interest. When that great traveler and political observer Tocqueville toured America, he noted something new under the political sun, namely, the extraordinary role religion played in American civic and political life. So important was this to Tocqueville that he devoted many chapters of his masterwork, *Democracy in America*, to the theme.

Tocqueville believed a quest for democratic equality was nigh-irresistible. But he feared that certain excesses might follow as everybody hunkers down in an individualistic way and goes in quest of the same thing. This might invite what Tocqueville called democratic despotism, a terrible isolation of selves, with the government increasingly a powerful and remote stranger.

To forestall this dire outcome, Tocqueville insisted that religion and its robust presence would become more, not less, important as American democracy matured. For religion and religiously derived moral imperatives call us out of ourselves, call us to come to know a

good in common we cannot know alone. By this Tocqueville did not mean that everyone had to become an evangelical or get born again as it is called — then and now; rather, he insisted that strong religious institutions help to constitute hope. Hope is born anew with the birth of each child. The world into which we are born may nourish or crush that hope.

Religion nurtures and sustains hope as a constituent feature of our identities and morality. It insists that we hopefully engage one another; that we really are our brothers' and sisters' keepers. It was said of the early Christians, "see how they love one another." Something of that love or *caritas* is necessary if we are to forestall a slide into isolating individualism and sustain the hope that, in turn, nourishes civic life.

Those of us who are involved in the debate about civil society often speak of civic virtue. I prefer the plural — civic virtues — for civic virtues are plural, not singular. Engaging with others from a stance of open-hearted conviction and

sincerity is a civic virtue and it requires patience. When we try to engage others to persuade them, we open ourselves up to persuasion at the same time. It takes a bit of fortitude to do that. We know that we are never going to get our own way all of the time. Compromise is a civic virtue in a democracy. Decent compromise is something we have to learn as this civic virtue doesn't come easily.

When I was in Prague, the Czech Republic, in the heady days following the so-called Velvet Revolution of 1989, I was told by a dissident, who suddenly found himself in government, that one of the things he and his compatriots had to learn was the virtue of compromise. "For us it has been a dirty word," he said, "because we refused to compromise with the Communist regime. But now that we are democratic citizens, we must treat compromise as a virtue, as a lesson to be learned."

Moral courage is a civic virtue. It takes some gumption to go against the grain because you believe a deep moral



norm is being violated. There is a story about the redoubtable Elizabeth Cady Stanton, one of the founders of the women's suffrage effort and its leading theoretician. Stumping for suffrage in Kansas in the company of Kansas suffrage leaders, she told one, as they prepared to go on stage to face hoots and catcalls, that they should hold their heads high and persevere. "My dear," she said, "we must all have a bit of stage courage." We must sometimes stand fast even at the risk of being a bit unpopular.

Participation is a moral virtue. Critics of the insistence that civil society is a moral imperative sometimes say, "Well, since you like participation so much, I guess that means you cannot criticize the Ku Klux Klan or the militias. They certainly mobilize people to participate." At this, one shakes one's head ruefully. For if such critics were paying careful attention, they would understand that participation of the sort civil society advocates, honors and praises must be consistent with the dignity of the human person.



Most of our highly charged moral-political debates have to do with human dignity. The abortion debate forces one to ask who is in or outside of the moral community. Is the unborn child a moral being of infinite worth, or not? From the stance of human dignity, rather than exclusively "rights," this question looks rather different. End-of-life issues vex and alarm us. We hear the phrase "dying with dignity." But what does this mean? If we think of humans as beings of infinite worth, what responsibilities does this impose on us if one among us is ill or infirm or permanently disabled?

Unfortunately, with the hotly contested stem cell debate, some have chosen to represent the issue as science versus private faith, or science versus irrationality. But here, too, questions emerge concerning human dignity and worth. Do we permit a set of businesses devoted to the manufacture and destruction of human embryos? Or is the liberal journal *Christian Century* right that this amounts to an unprecedented "instrumentalization" of human life? These questions give us a framework for debate as we keep in mind the moral imperative that frames civil society rightly understood.

Civil society cannot be a realm within which private interests masquerade as public concerns. It follows that no form of activism that systematically degrades whole categories of people because of accidents of birth (such as race or gender) can be part of a world of morally derived civic virtues.

Finally, we live in a morally divided era. On many of the central moral issues there are deep and abiding disputes. In a democracy, it is the case that these disputes will come to the surface and be debated, one hopes in a spirit of civic brotherhood and sisterhood. September 11 reminded us in the most shocking and horrible way how much we are a part of one another; how much a murderous assault on some is a murderous assault on all.

As the great Lincoln put it, "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies." We can live with our differences so long as they do not become dangerous divides that invite invidious assault. Perhaps one might say that civic engagement as a moral imperative calls us to active civic life

and, additionally, calls upon us to temper our claims in order that all of us might participate in civic life as equals one to the other. □

Jean Bethke Elshtain

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Elshtain has written extensively on the connections between the nation's political and ethical convictions. The timely *Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World* was published in 2003. *Augustine and the Limits of Politics* was named one of the top five religion books of 1996 by *The Christian Century*. And *Democracy on Trial* was named a *New York Times* notable book in 1995. She's a contributing editor of *The New Republic* magazine.

Billy Morrow Jackson

He's one of the leading landscape artists of the Midwest. And though he is a noted realist painter, we were drawn to the subtle idealism in two of his cityscapes, which are published with permission in this essay. Both manage to capture the social and political interconnections of community.

Jackson's works have been displayed in the National Museum of American Art and in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., as well as in many other museums across America.

He was on the art faculty at the University of Illinois for many years and continues to live and work in Champaign.

INALIENABLE RIGHT

To abolish citizenship as a right conferred upon those born in America would tear at the fabric of our national identity

by Margaret H. McCormick

Photographs courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

Clicking on the phrase “birthright citizenship” in a Google search will bring up calls for abolition from a host of organizations seeking to stop immigration to the United States. And yet the principle means that a baby born on U.S. soil is a U.S. citizen, regardless of the immigration status of the child’s parents. Known as *jus soli*, from the English common law concept “right of the land,” it is a rule under which nationality (citizenship) is acquired by location at birth. It ensures that each new generation of children will

belong to the national political body into which it is born.

Recent strident calls to abolish birthright citizenship, including legislation introduced in late March in the U.S. House of Representatives, demand a closer look at the evolution of this rule.

The principle of birthright citizenship did not take root immediately. Before the American Revolutionary War, colonists thought of themselves as owing allegiance to their individual colonies and to the King of England. After the Revolution, the states became separate political entities whose unifying bond was a pledge to support

independence. Persons born within a state were citizens of that state, but a national political community made up of all the states was not established until 1787 with the adoption of the U.S. Constitution.

Nothing in the Constitution explicitly indicated whether the United States was to adopt the common law principle that all persons born within the dominion of the sovereign were citizens.

In its early years, the country did recognize as citizens all children born within the dominion of the United States. But it did not take long for exceptions to be made when non-Anglo Saxons began to be a significant factor in the growth



Immigrants landing at Ellis Island, circa 1900

of the United States. Courts began to distort the interpretation of the birthright citizenship principle to preserve the racial homogeneity of the new nation.

The whole question came squarely before the Supreme Court in the case of *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, where the question of birthright citizenship was formed by Chief Justice Roger Taney as follows:

"Can a negro, whose ancestors were imported into this country, and sold as slaves, become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such become entitled to all the rights, and privileges, and immunities, guaranteed by that instrument to the citizen?"

Writing for the majority, Chief Justice Taney found that neither slaves nor descendants of slaves were citizens of the United States. Referring to the section of the Declaration of Independence that includes the phrase "all men are created equal," Taney reasoned that "it is too clear for dispute, that the enslaved African race were not intended to be included, and formed no part of the people who framed and adopted this declaration."

It took the Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation, a Civil Rights Act in 1866 and, finally, the 14th Amendment to the Constitution to change Taney's interpretation of citizenship and to firmly

implant *jus soli* into American jurisprudence. The 14th Amendment states unequivocally that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and the State where they reside." Ratified in 1868, the 14th Amendment was in direct response to the *Dred Scott* decision.

Thirty years later, the Supreme Court interpreted the 14th Amendment in the case of *U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark*. The case involved the U.S.-born child of Chinese laborers. In the latter half of the 19th century, when Chinese laborers were no longer needed after completion of the transcontinental railroad, Congress approved increasingly harsh measures, known as the Chinese Exclusion laws, claiming that the Chinese would not assimilate. Chinese-born immigrants were not permitted to naturalize, and thousands of Chinese immigrants who had come to the United States to work were excluded and deported.

Wong Kim Ark was born in 1873 in San Francisco to parents who were born in China. Upon return from a short visit to China, the United States attempted to prevent Wong Kim's entry, claiming that he was not a citizen. The Supreme Court found that the 14th Amendment conferred U.S. citizenship to Wong Kim at birth because he was born in the United States to parents who were subject to its jurisdiction. The court stated that the 14th Amendment had been interpreted to grant United States citizenship to the

children of subjects of other countries, and that interpretation should not change though the child's parents were Chinese.

This decision closed a gruesome chapter in our history when, over generations, enslaved and stateless children could not share in the rights and liberties of the American community.

But the question continues to re-emerge, and, for the past several years, various measures have been introduced in Congress to abolish birthright citizenship. The most recent would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to deny citizenship at birth to children born in the United States of parents who are not citizens or permanent resident aliens.

Of course, Congress cannot approve a law in direct and clear contradiction to the 14th Amendment, but if it could, we would surely be setting back the clock to a far darker period of our history. Imagine the America of the future where in each generation there is an expanding underclass without rights. They would be pushed underground, pressed into circumstances that would surely create problems far larger than those the proponents of these bills claim they want to solve.

The underlying premise of those who seek to abolish birthright citizenship is that it encourages illegal immigration. There are approximately 9.3 million undocumented immigrants in the country, according to the nonprofit Urban Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based social policy research



An urban street during the Great Depression



Immigrant children at Ellis Island

organization. Almost two-thirds of the undocumented population lives in just six states, and Illinois is among them. About 1.6 million children under 18 in the United States are themselves undocumented immigrants, and another 3 million children with undocumented parents are U.S. citizens because they were born here.

These numbers show that there is no question our immigration laws are utterly broken. The question is how to fix the problem. While there are many undocumented people in the United States, an increase in the number has far more to do with punitive laws that do not reflect our economic and political realities, particularly with respect to our relationship with our neighbor and ally Mexico, than with wrongdoing by would-be immigrants. Since the passage of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act in 1996, more people who formerly had access to legal status have been forced into the undocumented underclass. That there are so many undocumented residents does not mean immigration is bad for America; it simply means we have made very bad laws on immigration.

In fact, an independent Task Force on Immigration convened by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations recently issued a report, *Keeping the Promise: Immigration Proposals from the Heartland*, which found that the economic, social and political vitality of the United States can be attributed to the contributions of previous waves of immigrants and that immigration will be more crucial to the future growth, success and safety of the United States.

According to that

report, while the U.S. workforce is aging, the foreign-born population, which currently comprises 11.1 percent of the U.S. population, is growing in size and diversity. Meanwhile, economic ties between the United States, Canada and Mexico have deepened, and there is increased regional and global labor mobility.

Denying birthright citizenship would no more improve our immigration laws than gasoline would extinguish a fire. Yet a strong anti-immigration movement within Congress, especially the House of Representatives, has repeatedly pushed for ever-increasing restrictions on immigration. Abolition of birthright citizenship is one such proposal. But one that would have significant ramifications. If birthright citizenship were abolished, an exploited

underclass would grow exponentially, generation after generation, creating a class of people who have no legal rights, no allegiance to this or any other country — outcasts unable to participate in their own communities.

If we abolish birthright citizenship, we will tear the fabric of our national identity. We are a free country, a free people, a democracy steeped in concepts of due process and equal protection. Repeal of the 14th Amendment would transform America from a meritocracy to a caste system, revisiting the darkest era in American history. Citizenship would become an inherited right rather than an inalienable right. The late Barbara Jordan said in her final statement as chair of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, “To deny

birthright citizenship would derail the engine of American liberty.”

Fortunately for America, Congress alone cannot change the Constitution. As the Supreme Court stated back in 1898 in the *Wong Kim Ark* case, the 14th Amendment “conferred no authority upon Congress to restrict the effect of birth, declared by the Constitution to constitute a sufficient and complete right to citizenship.” That power is left to the people of the United States. And the people already exercised that power when the 14th Amendment was passed. □

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New immigrants on Hester Street, New York City, circa 1903

Prairie state?

As budget negotiations get under way, protecting Illinois' remaining grasslands and green spaces has become an effort in and of itself

by Paige E. Wassel

Photograph copyright Kim Karpeles, courtesy of the Lake County Forest Preserve District

Though it was nicknamed the "Prairie State" in 1842, Illinois has lost most of its natural prairie to development. Efforts to preserve Illinois' remaining grasslands and green spaces, and to protect wildlife and promote recreation, began attracting major state dollars two decades ago. But maintaining that commitment has become a preservation effort in and of itself.

Last year, grassroots groups helped protect special state funds created to acquire and preserve open space and natural areas. This spring, legislators are once again faced with proposals that rely on tapping those funds to fill holes in the state's general budget. And, though preservation efforts appear to enjoy statewide support, advocates are suggesting that conservation and recreation funding may need long-term protections against state budget-makers who are facing sagging revenues in the short-term.

In 2004, Gov. Rod Blagojevich saw conservation dollars as one solution to a state deficit of more than \$2 billion. He proposed a one-year "holiday" for the open space and natural areas initiatives. The programs are not without merit, the governor told lawmakers. "But in a year when the economy is struggling —



The 552-acre Ryerson Woods conservation area near Deerfield has 6.5 miles of trails.

a year where you have to make tough choices — to us, we think a holiday is reasonable, and it will save us \$34 million."

Those savings would have been deposited in the state's main checkbook, depleting the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Fund and the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund, which were created to foster recreational areas and save green space.

More than 140 conservancy groups protested the plan, questioning its constitutionality and arguing that a one-year funding break would result in an unrecoverable loss of land. Sen. Pamela Althoff, a McHenry Republican, took up those concerns, pushing for a

change in state law guaranteeing that money paid into the open space and natural areas funds could not be tapped when the state has trouble paying its bills. The conservation dollars, which are derived from a portion of the state tax on real estate transfers, should not be used to backfill unrelated budget shortfalls, Althoff argues.

"I just feel very strongly that when individuals agree to a tax, it just is an accountability measure to make sure that those dollars are being used for what we promised."

Bipartisan support in both chambers ultimately rebuffed the transfer of the funds, but legislators didn't buttress the funds against future onslaughts. And as lawmakers begin crafting a budget for the fiscal year that begins in July, open space and conservation dollars are again being eyed for other purposes.

The Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Program, which allows local governments to build playgrounds, basketball courts and nature preserves, typically awards some \$20 million in state grants each year. The Natural Areas Acquisition Program spends about \$5 million a year purchasing and preserving natural areas that are often home to endangered species.

COMPARING MIDWESTERN STATES

Recreation and conservation land

State	State-owned acres	Percent of state	Acres per 1,000 people
Michigan	4,472,175	12.3 percent	450
Minnesota	6,018,000	11.8 percent	1,223
Wisconsin	1,317,525	3.8 percent	246
Ohio	478,876	1.8 percent	42
Indiana	339,068	1.5 percent	56
Illinois	306,187	0.9 percent	25
Iowa	302,552	0.8 percent	103

SOURCE: Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Joint Legislative Audit Committee

The DuPage County Forest Preserve District first acquired 23 acres of the Medinah Wetlands in 2000. The district received a \$703,000 state grant toward the cost.

The accounts that bankroll the program are among some 350 dedicated funds the governor wants to put into a special fund for elementary and secondary education. Under the plan, the state would commandeer most of the dollars left in these funds at the end of this fiscal year. If lawmakers agree, education would be assured of an annual boost of \$140 million in each of the next three years.

Blagojevich aides stress the plan would not endanger conservation efforts or any other program funded by the hundreds of dedicated accounts. "That is not going to cause, in any way, shape, or form, a negative impact on these funds' abilities to meet their operating needs," says Becky Carroll, a Blagojevich budget spokeswoman. "This comes down to a matter of priorities."

Preservationists argue it's more a matter of precedent, one that could mark a steep decline in the state's commitment to conservation and recreation.

It also would follow a national trend. President John F. Kennedy pushed for

legislation that created the Land and Water Conservation Fund program in 1964 with the intent of helping states pay for public recreation areas. But as the program grew, federal lawmakers raided the fund to pay other bills, sapping cash that had gone to state grants.

Facing shrinking federal funds, the Illinois Association of Park Districts pushed legislation to duplicate the land conservation program at the state level, creating in 1986 the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Program. It awards annual grants to local governments, enabling them to better afford projects that allow the public to enjoy everything from fields and streams to skate parks and outdoor swimming pools. Also funded by the real estate tax, the natural areas acquisition program focuses on acquiring and preserving forests, wetlands, prairies and other habitats with diverse vegetation and wildlife.

In 1989, supporters realized that general state dollars were an unsteady funding source, so the open space

program was linked to the more reliable real estate transfer tax, says Ted Flickinger, president and CEO of the Illinois Association of Park Districts. On the sale of a \$100,000 home, the tax works out to \$100. Half the revenue funds affordable housing efforts, while 35 percent goes to open space acquisition and development and 15 percent fuels natural areas spending.

Brent Manning, executive director of the DuPage County Forest Preserve District and former director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, says the real estate fee should fund programs that attempt to balance nature with neighborhoods.

"It's a funding source that makes a lot of sense," he says. "As development continues, this is the opportunity to set aside some pieces of land for quality of life purposes."

Improving community recreation opportunities is one of the main goals of the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Program. Department of Natural Resources staff evaluate grant

applications on several factors, including the promotion of conservation. Generally, the proposals fall into two categories: buying land to create parks and nature preserves and developing those areas with playgrounds, trails and other recreational structures. In most cases, the state awards up to \$750,000 for land purchases and \$400,000 for development grants, but local governments must bear at least half the cost of any project. Grant recipients aren't reimbursed by the state until after the project is completed.

This year, the state awarded 77 grants worth \$25.3 million, which included \$4 million in federal money. Since its creation, the state's open space program has provided \$196.4 million in grants to 1,076 local government units.

The Natural Areas Acquisition Fund is also supported by the real estate tax. But that program focuses on acquiring and preserving land with high quality, rich resource areas. This conservation effort became a concern in the mid-1970s when a natural areas inventory revealed that less than 1 percent of the Illinois landscape remained as the first settlers had discovered it in the early 1800s. Unlike the open space program, this initiative is managed by the state, with program dollars going toward land acquisition and salaries for staff and biologists, says Tom Flattery, office director of realty, environment and planning for natural resources.

"It's making some effort to protect our settlement heritage," Flattery says. "It's similar to protecting endangered species."

Like the open space program, the conservation initiative addresses a quality of life issue, Flattery says, noting the role natural habitats play in protecting plant and animal species. Natural areas can prevent soil erosion near rivers and lakes, while providing a buffer that separates farmland chemicals from sources of drinking water. And prairies and woodlands also give homes to a number of creatures and hint at an Illinois landscape that once was dominated by "prairies verdant growing." The natural areas program spent \$30 million acquiring 13,000 acres over the past 10 years, including Hanover Bluff in far-northwestern Jo Daviess County, Cache River in

southernmost Johnson County and Redwing Slough in northeastern Lake County.

Flattery says efforts to preserve open space and natural areas have been effective, but Illinois is still far behind other states, having made little improvement since a 1990 Texas study put Illinois 48th out of 50 states in open space ownership. He attributes the poor ranking, in part, to the state's rich topsoil, on display in many a corn and soybean field, which boosts the value of the land.

In the Chicago area, a booming population has a similar effect on property values. "Let's face it, when you look at the urban sprawl, it's a competition between how fast [communities] can grow and how fast we can protect [open spaces]," Flattery says.

In fact, Kendall County, about 40 miles southwest of Chicago, is the second-fastest growing county nationwide, according to U.S. Census data from 2003 to 2004. Boone and Will counties, two of Illinois' northernmost counties, also made the top 100 list.

Downstate, acreage may not be as pricey as in suburbia, but the land is not lying fallow. Flattery notes that satellite imagery shows 76 percent of Illinois is in agricultural production.

While economic development might impede conservation efforts, state surveys show widespread public support for open space protection. In 2003, the Department of Natural Resources found that 56 percent of respondents said open space is important to quality of life, 82 percent thought such land should be acquired before it is lost to development and 92 percent believed open space should be preserved to protect wildlife habitat.

Park and forest preserve district officials note their dependence on the state programs because their hands often are tied by local tax caps and the development that follows growing populations.

James Breen, director of the St. Charles Park District, says open space funding has been essential to the western suburb's ability to provide community recreational facilities, including playground equipment, ball fields, fishing ponds and exercise paths. In the past two

Natural areas can prevent soil erosion near rivers and lakes, while providing a buffer that separates farmland chemicals from sources of drinking water. And prairies and woodlands also give homes to a number of creatures and hint at an Illinois landscape that once was dominated by "prairies verdant growing."

Open lands funding

The state tax on real estate transfers is equal to \$1 for every \$1,000 a property is worth. That means the seller of a \$100,000 home owes the state \$100. The Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Fund gets 35 percent of the tax revenue. That share amounted to \$30 million last year. The state awards about \$20 million in open space grants each year, but doesn't pay recipients until a project is completed, which can take a couple years. In other words, the open space fund is liable for several years' worth of projects. If every local government could cash in their grants today, the fund would be short \$13 million because it has a balance of \$48 million but owes \$61 million in awards.

The governor's office views the fund's large cash balance as a surplus, some of which can be diverted to spend on elementary and secondary education.

Paige E. Wassel

years alone, the district was awarded \$791,300 in state grants. "It would be impossible to provide for these types of parks and recreational facilities if it were not for the state assistance provided through this program," Breen says.

Carl Becker, director of Conservation Programs for The Nature Conservancy in Illinois, says public support for the issue can be seen in the Statehouse. He points out that lawmakers defeated the plan to zero out funding last year. "This resonates throughout the state of Illinois by people in every community and that was reflected last year by the votes of their representatives and senators."

Conservation advocates want legislators to stick up for the programs again this year, arguing that the governor's proposed "fund sweep" raises a constitutional question: whether a fee paid by one group — in this case the sellers of real estate — can be funneled into the state's main checkbook. In the past, courts have ruled that fees must have some relation to the state service they support. In this sense, land development supports land conservation. If Blagojevich gets his way, the fee also would fund education.

Conservationists balk at the suggestion that the open space fund is hoarding a surplus. Projects can take a year or two to complete, at which point the fund needs cash to reimburse local governments. "It's what I would call a spurious surplus," Becker says. "It's really not there."

The administration disagrees, saying the open space money has always been able to meet statewide demands. "It's never been able to make more grants than money available in the fund," Carroll says. "Removing a small portion of their

surplus dollars will not impact their ability to provide additional grants."

But while the accounts may show a positive balance at the end of a fiscal year, they may actually be overdrawn. For example, with three months left in this budget year, the open space fund had a cash balance of \$48 million. But, the program was on the hook for \$61 million in grants promised but not yet cashed in by local governments.

As the legislature prepares to negotiate budget specifics, some legislators seem certain the conservation accounts will be removed from the final list of funds tapped for education spending. "As long as any administration proposes to utilize those funds for any other purpose, I'm confident we as a group will come

together and object to it," says Althoff, the McHenry Republican.

But for some conservation supporters, such assurances fall short.

Manning, the DuPage Forest Preserve director, says the biggest problem facing the funds now is their apparent accessibility to cash hungry budget-makers. "Politicians desire to use those funds for something else," Manning says. "They see this big pile of money sitting there, but the fact is it's not sitting there. It's being distributed as the projects reach completion."

Guaranteeing the funds' exclusivity may prove difficult, as the dollars in both the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Fund and the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund have been

tapped for general distribution in the past. Three years ago, as former Gov. George Ryan was cobbling together his last state budget, lawmakers agreed to grab \$29 million from the open space fund and deposit it in the state's checking account.

Kenneth Fiske works as a consultant with Conservation Services in Woodstock, a business focused on helping localities preserve open space. A former McHenry County Conservation District director, Fiske has been writing conservation grant proposals since 1971. He points to the difficulties the federal program faced when dedicated money became the subject of budget transfers and questions whether the state programs will suffer without permanent protections.

"Right now, we all think the grant program is fairly stable," Fiske says. "It needs to be in a fund that can't be moved around. If it can be moved around, we're going to have trouble every year." □

Photograph copyright Pat Wadecki, courtesy of the Lake County Forest Preserve District



The Lake County Forest Preserve District's Half Day Pond is located near Vernon Hills.

Ready or not

The states prepare to fight the plague
and other potential threats posed by bioterrorists

by Pat Guinane

It takes teamwork and 21st century technology to take on an Old World foe.

That's the lesson state officials learned two years ago when a simulated release of the pneumonic plague tested the network in place to protect Illinois against real acts of bioterrorism.

Known as TOPOFF 2 — indicating participation of top officials from two states, 19 federal agencies and the Canadian government — the drill was designed to show how leaders would respond to an attack involving biological weapons of mass destruction.

Last month, New Jersey and Connecticut were grappling with TOPOFF 3, the most recent mock biological terrorism trial. It appeared they too were battling an intentional release of imaginary plague.

In Illinois, the May 2003 five-day exercise began with the simulated aerosol release of the plague at three Chicago locations: O'Hare International Airport, Union Station and the United Center, where, according to the script, the Blackhawks were playing an imaginary NHL playoff game.

All three targets could draw thousands of people from throughout Illinois and some from across the globe. But as the drill simulated, most of those infected

would soon flood Chicago-area hospitals showing signs of a highly contagious airborne disease, one that can kill if antibiotics aren't administered within 24 hours and one that could be mistaken for a more common case of pneumonia.

Indeed, as the infection spread rapidly, the simulation showed the potential strain such an attack could place on area hospitals, as well as morgues. Moreover, the drill, which also simulated a terrorist-led "dirty bomb" attack in Seattle, tested the mettle of government officials who would have to find the root of the problem, keep the public from panicking and coordinate the response of nurses, doctors, police and fire officials, some of whom would be working around the clock amid potential chaos.

All photographs courtesy of the Illinois Department of Public Health



An Illinois Department of Public Health scientist tests for the anthrax bacterium.

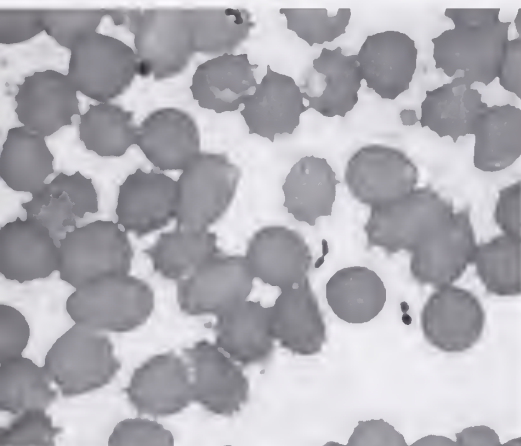
This premeditated bedlam gave the state a rare opportunity to test its emergency response infrastructure against a biological terrorist attack of unprecedented proportions. And while most would argue no state is entirely prepared for acts of bioterrorism, the federal exercise helped Illinois implement several security upgrades, some of which have garnered national recognition.

"We were lucky, as a state, to be able to participate in TOPOFF 2," says

Dr. Eric Whitaker, director of the Illinois Department of Public Health. He says the drill helped the state test its "surge capacity," or its ability to quickly respond to such emergencies as an act of bioterrorism, and then sustain coordinated cooperation among a multitude of federal, state and local agencies.

"When you have a mass casualty episode or incident, you need an influx of staff to help deal with it, but then the question becomes how do you contain and maintain a high level of service over a long period of time," Whitaker says. "We have worked together with sister agencies, local health departments and hospitals to think about how to do that."

By at least one indicator, that work has begun to pay off. In October 2003, five



The magnified blood smear contains plague bacterium. Half of all cases in the United States are fatal when the bacteria infect the lungs, causing the pneumonic form of plague.

months after TOPOFF 2, Gov. Rod Blagojevich announced that Illinois was the first state to receive the federal government's highest rating for its ability to respond to acts of bioterrorism. Earning "green" status from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention means that, in the event of an emergency, Illinois is adequately prepared to distribute vaccines, antidotes and other medical supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile.

Illinois is one of only six states to receive the adequate rating, according to a December 2004 report from Trust for America's Health, a nonprofit non-partisan national advocacy group based in Washington, D.C.

The analysis, *Ready or Not? Protecting the Public's Health in the Age of Bioterrorism*, examined 10 key factors. Illinois drew positive marks in half of those categories. In addition to being prepared to dispense the emergency medical supplies, Illinois drew praise in the report for maintaining its public health spending despite tough budget times and for electronically monitoring disease outbreaks. It lost points for having insufficient laboratory capacity and too few scientists to respond to acts of bioterrorism, including a suspected outbreak of biological agents such as anthrax or the plague.

"Illinois is kind of right in the middle of the pack," says Michael Earls, spokesman for Trust for America's Health and co-author of the report. "Overall, the state mirrored what we

found in a lot of the nation on the whole, which is, while progress has been made, certainly it has been incremental progress and only in some directions."

In the past, a sound public health system was one capable of confronting a problem once it has been identified. But in the age of bioterrorism, the network also must be judged by its abilities to detect potential disasters and minimize them before they begin to wreak havoc.

"There's two different paradigms that need to be thought through," says Dr. Michael Allswede, director of the Strategic Medical Intelligence initiative at the University of Pittsburgh Center for Biosecurity. "Emergency management people look at only one paradigm, which is, an event occurs and causes smoke and fire."

Under former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno, Allswede served on an advisory board for the precursor to what is now the Department of Homeland Security. More recently, he participated in TOPOFF 2, serving as a medical evaluator for the Chicago-area response to the drill.

Allswede says the exercise reinforced the notion that government agencies can be fairly adept at sharing information, but typically the sharing doesn't start until after a disaster has been confirmed, which can be a fairly easy task in the case of a tornado. It can be a much more difficult undertaking to diagnose and confirm an outbreak of the plague.

"The problem is that if you have an illness that occurs in a population, that may also be a public health emergency. That may also be a criminal act. That may also be an incident of national security. We're just not very good at making those transitions and sharing information quickly."

Mike Chamness chairs the Illinois Terrorism Task Force and, under former Gov. George Ryan, he also directed the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. The task force is responsible for formulating policy, while emergency management handles response. Chamness says the state's disaster response strategy stresses communication among agencies.

Illinois has been recognized for innovation. Last fall, the state won an award from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government for

creating a trio of Weapons of Mass Destruction Teams. The teams enlist staff from half a dozen state agencies, including police, environmental protection and public health. The state also can deploy dozens of trained hazardous materials teams across Illinois.

The state has worked to strengthen the bonds between county and municipal forces. In 1968, the state deployed a mutual assistance alarm network for fighting fires. And today roughly two-thirds of the state's fire departments are signed up to assist neighboring communities. For instance, when the LaSalle Bank fire in Chicago's Loop raged for more than five hours last December, outside firefighters were called in to help extinguish three other blazes within city limits.

TOPOFF 2 revealed the need for a similar network of police departments. With its own officers occupied by the drill, Chicago needed hundreds of reinforcements to assist in patrolling city streets. The state was charged with mustering those support troops from neighboring police forces. Now, a newly created law enforcement assistance network links every county sheriff's department in Illinois and some 600 local jurisdictions.

While state and federal officials would coordinate the response to an act of bioterrorism, TOPOFF 2 showed the critical support role required of local units. The state Department of Public Health realized this as well and sped up efforts to create a mutual assistance network of county and municipal health departments. All but two of the state's 95 local health agencies have signed onto the statewide pact. Illinois also has volunteer emergency response teams

Shown here is Yersinia pestis bacterium, which is the cause of plague, a disease so rare that few doctors have seen it.





A public health department scientist tests for anthrax, which can infect the lungs, digestive system or skin.

composed of medical professionals.

While the state has worked to bolster its response capabilities, it also has tried to tackle the much more difficult task of preventing acts of bioterrorism. “The lesson we learned from TOPOFF is that we have to improve our proactivity and not only be responsive,” says Whitaker, the Illinois public health director. The state has installed multiple environmental sensors to search the air for deadly pathogens such as anthrax. But, Whitaker says, because of security reasons he cannot reveal how many of the devices are in place, nor would he say what types of facilities they monitor.

Allswede, the biosecurity expert, says without a defined front such technology only goes so far. “The medical system and public health system has a grand challenge to become more self-aware,” he says. “And I think it is more important to develop that aspect than it is to put monitors around or detectors around because detectors work pretty well if you have a perimeter to defend, but not very well if you have the cluster of targets — bars, restaurants, homes, schools, dormitories, auditoriums, stadiums — that comprise American society. We don’t have enough detectors to create a network.”

To that end, Illinois has installed an electronic method of disease reporting. Fully implemented earlier this year, the system allows doctors and hospitals

to rapidly report cases of infectious disease. The state public health department can step in if it notices an uptick in any particular ailment. This could serve as an early warning for bioterrorism because the early signs of biological agents such as anthrax can mirror symptoms of more common infections.

Public health isn’t the only state agency that sought to improve detection methods. “After Blagojevich took office in 2003, he wanted us to invest more heavily on the prevention side. And, frankly, it was the right time to do that because you get to a certain point in building up response capacity that it’s actually overkill,” says Chamness, the terrorism task force director.

Under Blagojevich, Illinois also has established a Statewide Terrorist Intelligence Center, a covert, around-the-clock operation where, Chamness says, staff “spends all day doing analysis of terrorism-related information, all the way down to local traffic stops.”

And the state has used \$2.4 million in federal homeland security dollars to purchase two portable devices that use low-level gamma rays to peer into semitrailers and shipping containers. The equipment has helped haul in \$2 million in drugs and other contraband, which Chamness says illustrates how most anti-terrorism infrastructure is a dual-purpose tool. What can help the

state respond to a dirty bomb could also prove valuable in natural disaster responses. For example, the state is in the process of equipping every county and several other key dispatch sites with a satellite communications system that allows them to receive messages from the state, even when phone lines are jammed and cellular connections are down. The satellite system was tested on a smaller scale during TOPOFF 2.

Such advances should certainly help, but not without teamwork, which is why it seems appropriate for Allswede to employ a technology metaphor to describe the current level of biosecurity and the challenges ahead.

“The state of preparedness, to me, is a lot like software development in the 1970s. There are lots of companies, lots of different philosophies, lots of different products out there. Nothing necessarily integrates very well with anything else, which is kind of the stage of development we’re in,” Allswede says. “Our grand challenge is trying to create integration. The problem is, we as a nation have created a system of government that has lots of checks and balances and lots of different levels and lots of shared, plural authority, so that there isn’t really one major place or one major authority that will make a single decision and change the world. And that’s to our benefit.” □

FACTLESS TRUTH

*In one of the most scientifically based societies in history
the truth may go marching on, but facts stumble and fall*

by Robert Kuhn McGregor

History loves the unusual. The bland, the everyday, the expected make little impact on the textbooks. Give us the outré, just to focus our attention. That being the case, we of the 21st century have little to fear: The histories will remember us. Bravely facing the challenges of the new millennium, our faces set, our expressions solemn yet assured, we have invented for ourselves a truly puzzling situation. We Americans live in a culture where facts have become far more valuable than truth.

How is this so? You may ask (and with good reason). The answer is a simple matter of capitalist economics: The thing most rare becomes the most precious. Every day I am confronted with the truth. Painful truth, contradictory truth, elemental truth, truth that defies logic. Leaders political and spiritual speak nothing but truth all the time — you need merely to ask them. But facts are a different matter. Those same leaders who verbally embrace the truth are in the active pursuit of suppressing facts, facts discovered, uncovered on a continual basis by their very own minions. The denial, the erasure of simple facts has (in fact) become something of an epidemic.

The federal government employs fact finders by the thousands, dedicated researchers employing the carefully honed tools of their craft to reveal how the world is behaving, anything from the death rates of frogs to the death rates of AIDS sufferers. Their bosses — our elected officials — are now in the business of not

merely ignoring the reports of such researchers, but are actively ordering them to alter or destroy the facts they have uncovered. Meteorologist Richard Somerville contends that scientists now face “a higher degree of political interference” than ever before, a judgment echoed by several colleagues across the nation.

Facts seem to possess an uncomfortable way of getting in the path of truth — or at least the truth our leaders would prefer us to believe. We rush toward the future armed with comforting but baseless reports contending that frogs and people are not dying in ominous numbers across the world. And that is just the surface glare of the immense snow bank that buries us in factless truth.

There is nothing new in this. More than two millennia ago, the Duke of Chin, the first true emperor of China, set out to suppress all forms of knowledge save tracts on agriculture and divination. The exceptions were quite rational: He wished to eat, and he longed to live forever. The duke felt nothing else was necessary to himself or his millions of subjects, so he set about systematically burning books and scholars, destroying any form of knowledge not to his liking. The Great Wall of China exists in part because he needed a practical means of killing thousands of fact finders — the original Wall was perhaps the world’s longest mass grave. China shook off this madness only when the duke passed on — ironically, as he was traveling to a soothsayer who was

to provide him the elixir of eternal life.

I suppose every government in history has from time to time attempted to emulate the Duke of Chin and smother uncomfortable knowledge — usually with poor success. Certainly the United States has never been immune to the temptation. Back in antebellum days, that paragon of truth John C. Calhoun, states’ rights advocate and merciless slaveholder, used his position as U.S. secretary of state to micromanage the statistics derived from the federal Census of 1840. That census, Calhoun claimed, clearly counted far higher rates of insanity among free Northern blacks than among enslaved Southern blacks, thereby proving the “beneficence” of the slave system. Figures do not lie. According to the released statistics, there were more insane black people in several Northern counties than there were blacks, period. That is a serious insanity rate. One wonders who juggled Calhoun’s facts, or if he (in fact) made them up himself.

Moving closer to the present, the picture grows no happier. Enough horror stories have trickled out from the secret archives of the 1950s to make everyone aware that the national government lied about its own experiments in a tragic effort to downplay the dangers of radiation. We still live and breathe the consequences. A still more notorious episode was the experience of Rachel Carson, the former government scientist who blew the whistle on the unholy alliance between the government and the chemical industry, a cozy relationship inflicting daily harm on



Millions died during the 1918 flu epidemic. This is Influenza Ward No. 1 of the U.S. Army Camp Hospital No. 45 in France.

everything American.

Carson, a marine biologist, had retired from writing government pamphlets on the strength of her best-selling nonfiction work, *The Sea Around Us*. She planned to spend her last years writing more such popular science, until fate intervened in the form of concerned neighbors and her own observations. Federal, state and local governments were spraying everything in sight in an effort to control mosquitoes. Nature (with the exception of mosquitoes) was dying, and human health was suffering. Attempting to persuade close friends in government and academia to sound the alarm, she confronted a wall of imposed silence. There was no money — no government grants, no private (read industrial) support for revealing the facts about DDT and chlordane. So Carson did it herself, investing years of exhaustive research into every study, every paper, every government report ever written about the carbon-based chemicals and their effects. The result was the fact-laced and explosive *Silent Spring*, a book that tells it as it is.

Government and industry joined hands to condemn the work, dismissing the research as the hysterical claims of an unhealthy old woman. It was only after a commission appointed by President John F. Kennedy determined that Carson's work was proper, exhaustive and correct that readers stopped listening to the fake "experts" in their white coats and began attending to a real scientist. More than 40 years later, *Silent Spring*

stands as a monument to the dangers of uncomfortable facts suppressed. And still, yokels in government and the media persist, crying for a return to DDT. Just this past month, some benighted soul, pointing to the persistence of malaria-carrying mosquitoes across the globe, advocated DDT as a solution, ignoring or forgetting that Rachel Carson years ago documented the horrors of that path. DDT does not control mosquitoes more than momentarily, the stuff is a danger to human health and it destroys natural food webs. Those are just facts, of course.

The litany goes on. Fifteen years ago, the crisis was spotted owls in old growth forests. That little episode had all the ingredients of a heartwarming tempest: lost jobs, government conservation policy, environmental preservation pressures, the Endangered Species Act. Plainly, not just people but policies and even laws were in conflict; some difficult decisions had to be made. But decision-makers are seldom brave; far easier to fabricate a few facts of spotted owl biology to justify a politically motivated continuation of policy. So we were confronted with all manner of lies: Spotted owls were not a distinct species, spotted owls did not depend on old growth forests, spotted owls nested at Wal-Mart stores.

But owls are owls, and facts are facts. Jack Ward Thomas, the honest-to-God wildlife biologist the government appointed to study the real owls, actually appeared at a hostile public gathering and

said, "I want to stand up here and let you see if I'm as big a sonofabitch as you think I am." He had studied the birds, and he had determined beyond doubt that to destroy the old growth was to destroy the owls' habitat, a direct violation of federal law. After that, policymakers were certainly free to discuss how much they valued that law, how much they valued forest "conservation," how much they valued lumbermen's votes. What they could not change was how a dwindling number of spotted owls chose to live their lives. Faced with such hard, uncompromising, nubby pieces of information, officials opted to emphasize deliberate lies instead. They were after the truth, and the particular facts were mighty inconvenient.

Do we progress? Do we learn from our past? Surely only the simple-minded could possibly think so. In what is ostensibly one of the most scientifically based societies in the long history of the world, the truth may go marching on, but facts stumble and fall, to be buried as unobtrusively as possible. Peel back the newspapers, read between the lines to see what we are not heeding now. All across the world, frogs, those skin-sensitive little barometers of environmental health, are dying in prodigious numbers, or emerging from tadpoles with too many legs, tails and heads. Every respectable scientific study confirms that global temperatures are rising, that climate is changing. And every day, nuclear generators produce still more radioactive material — exceedingly

harmful to all living things — that we have no good place to store. Do our fair-haired, much-beloved boys and girls of officialdom present such items to an informed and intelligent citizenry, that we might discuss them honestly and openly? Try not to be silly. We get nothing but empty reassurances, echoes of the white-coated authorities from Rachel Carson's day. Nine out of 10 experts agree: Everything is fine.

Everything is not fine. We may not be in deadly crisis, but we do have some decisions to make for the health of the world. To make such decisions, we need all the facts we can lay our hands on; we need to know the genuine state of things. Fortunately, over the past half-century, our government has seen fit to expend good taxpayer money to fund an army of scientists — biologists, mathematicians, chemists, physicists — to go out and collect just the facts we need. Unfortunately, the policy types now see fit to suppress or destroy the data their own scientists assemble. What could possibly be less democratic than this?

As long ago as the 1960s, the fatal flaw nested in the brave new world of nuclear energy became sickeningly obvious: what to do with the death-dealing radioactive waste that remained deadly for 10,000 years? Bury it was the obvious answer. But where? The entombment would have to be absolutely leak proof and geologically stable, characteristics that omitted most of the country from consideration. Attention soon focused on Yucca Mountain, a desiccated outcrop of the Sierra Nevada belonging to Nevada. Government did its best to make Yucca Mountain fit the critically defined criteria for a national nuclear dump — they tried so hard they actually invented numbers modeling the local geology. Energy Department official James Raleigh now reports that researchers studying geologic conditions in 1998 never calibrated their equipment properly, and then lied about their mistake. Needless to say, such statistical fibs eventually came to light, fueling Nevada's understandable desire to close down the project. Officials have already begun to consider alternatives to Yucca Mountain. Tampering with the facts has destroyed any faith in the site's potential.

Apart from nuclear radiation, the hottest of hot button subjects has to be the complex of difficult issues bearing the unfortunate label "global warming" — climate change is a far better, less disturbing term. No one in the scientific community would argue that the issues are not difficult. Climate change is difficult to measure, and even more impossible to anticipate. At what point do tendencies become irrevocable realities? Add to this the political dynamite inherent in discussions of cause and solution. Global warming has become a minefield. To negotiate the mines, we need to know the data. How quickly are annual mean temperatures shifting across the globe? How are ocean currents responding? Have vegetation patterns begun to shift? How are the frogs doing?

We don't know. All of these questions (in fact) have answers, but the public will never gain access to the unvarnished data. The do-gooders of our government have decided such information is not good for us — whether for reasons of political expediency, political faith or political truth, it is difficult to say. Before government climatologists, oceanographers and other such researchers — our own scientists — can publish their findings, other officials tweak, weaken or simply eliminate the numbers demonstrating that climate change is happening. The practice is "not only irresponsible, but a clear and present danger," in the words of Tim Barnet, a climatologist with 35 years of government experience. The idea seems to be that you can stop nature from happening by simply lying about it. A dubious proposition.

A great many folks are concerned about climate change, for very good reasons. If climatic models are correct, the West will become more arid than ever (even as populations continue to rise), while cities along the East Coast will have to build gondolas to transport people down streets turned to canals. Some advance planning would seem to be in order, if the danger is real. We have no way of knowing; our government is determined to "torque the science beforehand with preconditions."

The suppression of scientific inquiry is nothing more than expression of supreme arrogance. Officials believe they already know the truth; facts that contradict what they know must be contaminated. America

historically has paid heavily for that attitude. Millions died in 1918 because the wisdom was that a flu epidemic could not happen here — the facts proved otherwise. Conventional truth made DDT the wonder of the age; the wonder chemical (in fact) very nearly wiped out entire portions of our ecosystems while spurring the evolution of super mosquitoes. Nuclear power was to be the means of safe, clean generation of so much electricity we would have to give it away; now we have nowhere to store the byproducts. We cannot change these things. No culture has ever profited by ignoring fundamental facts about its own existence; it is the careful collection and unprejudiced distribution of such facts that sustains human life. We have to have some idea of what is coming, what is safe, what is injurious. No one flourishes in ignorance.

Facts prove nothing, so the saying goes. There may even be some truth in that. Scientists are too often a naive lot, blind to all but their own instruments, unable to see the potential consequences in the information they derive. Science itself will not resolve the questions surrounding climate change or radiation disposal. The human race as a whole must decide how to respond to what is happening. Perhaps global warming will do us good, open new opportunities for beachfront property. Maybe radiation will produce enough mutation to evolve a more intelligent humanity. Maybe only French restaurants will miss the frogs. I rather doubt each of these propositions, but we do need to discuss them — intelligently. That is where the facts come in. I want to know how many frogs are dying, and why.

So facts have become our great national treasure, precious for their rarity. Fortunately, it is the sort of treasure we can share to our mutual enrichment. All we have to do is bring those irreducible nuggets into the open light, see how the world is behaving, how nature deviates from our expectations.

As for truth, we have more than enough of that. I for one would like to see some honesty for a change. □

Robert Kuhn McGregor, an environmental historian at the University of Illinois at Springfield, is a frequent contributor to the magazine.

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Governor wants new gaming board rules

Though Gov. Rod Blagojevich tapped **Sheila Simon** to the gaming board in March, knowing that under state law she was unable to serve, he did shape a new panel that is already cleaning house.

The governor says he turned to Simon and other new gaming board members in an exhaustive search for candidates of the "utmost integrity" who had no connections to gaming. The board's new chair, retired Cook County Judge **Aaron Jaffe**, appointed former federal Judge **Abner Mikva** to preside over disciplinary hearings involving the bankrupt Emerald Casino's ownership of the state's 10th gaming license.

Simon, the daughter of the late U.S. Sen. Paul Simon and a Carbondale City Council member, says the governor's office warned her the appointment would be in conflict with a provision in the law that prohibits members of the Illinois Gaming Board from serving on another paid public body. The governor sought to revise that law.

Simon, who also is a law professor at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, said she was comfortable with being the subject of a special provision, as long as the change would be narrow enough to uphold the intent to avoid conflict of interest.

At the same time, she said she wouldn't be concerned if no law was made to get her on the board. When asked, she laughed, saying, "It's not been a lifelong dream of mine to serve on the gaming board."

Hale sentenced

White supremacist **Matthew Hale**, convicted of soliciting the murder of federal Judge Joan Lefkow, faces a four-decade-long prison term. Hale, who calls himself pontifex maximus of an East Peoria-based "church" that preaches white supremacy, served as his own attorney and claimed innocence. Hale is accused of trying to get an FBI informant to kill Lefkow after she ordered him to stop using the World Church of the Creator name because of trademark infringement.

In February, Lefkow's husband and mother were murdered by a disgruntled plaintiff in an unrelated case.

CMS director resigns

Michael Rumman resigned as director of Central Management Services to seek work in the private sector.

Before joining CMS two years ago, Rumman was president of Peoples Energy Services in Chicago.

Assistant CMS Director **Paul Campbell** has been appointed to replace Rumman. Before joining CMS, Campbell was a partner at Piper Rudnick, a law firm and one-time lobbyist for Mesirow Financial. Mesirow's real estate division is part of a consortium that won \$31 million in consulting work from CMS.

CMS administers purchasing, information technology and telecommunications operations for state government. It also manages insurance benefits for state employees. Under Rumman, CMS's responsibilities grew to include real estate management, auditing and legal services. And all agency public relations specialists now report to centralized communications offices within CMS.

During Rumman's tenure, the agency hired a series of outside consultants in sometimes controversial efforts to streamline agency operations.



Michael Rumman

Historical society's chief returns to Smithsonian



Lonnie Bunch

Lonnie Bunch, president of the Chicago Historical Society, will leave that institution this summer to become the founding director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Bunch, who had started a major fundraising campaign for the historical society's 150th anniversary, is a former Smithsonian Institution curator. He has been president of the historical society since 2001.

According to the Smithsonian, in founding the African-American museum, Bunch will devise its mission, create exhibitions and programming and lead fundraising efforts. The focus of the Washington, D.C., museum will be the history, culture and contributions of African Americans.

"I am humbled and excited about the possibility of helping to create such an important national museum for the Smithsonian Institution," Bunch said in a prepared statement. "Though I am saddened to be leaving one of the nation's premier history museums, the opportunity to create a museum that will explore African-American culture, and one that can remind us all of the centrality of race in our lives, was too important to pass up."

Before joining the historical society, Bunch had worked at the Smithsonian as the associate director for curatorial affairs at the National Museum of American History. Prior to that, he worked as the founding curator of the California African American Museum in Los Angeles. He also had previously worked as a professor of history at the University of Massachusetts and, early in his career, as an education specialist at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum.

The Chicago Historical Society, one of the oldest history museums in the nation, will celebrate its 150th anniversary next year. Bunch had just announced a \$22 million fundraising campaign to renovate the historical society before making his decision to take the new position.

For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

Saul Bellow



Arguably the most prominent writer of fiction with an Illinois connection died April 5. He was 89.

Bellow, winner of the Nobel and Pulitzer prizes and multiple National Book Awards, was born to Russian-Jewish immigrant parents in Quebec. His family moved to Chicago when he was 9 years old, and he was schooled in that city, attending the University of Chicago and graduating from Northwestern University. His early work included biographies of Midwestern novelists for the WPA Federal Writers' Project in Chicago.

Bellow also won international honors. In 1965, he became the first American to be awarded the International Literary Prize, which he won for *Herzog*. Three years later, he received France's *Croix de Chevalier des Arts et Lettres* and the B'nai B'rith Jewish Heritage award for excellence in Jewish literature.

Though he went to Paris on a Guggenheim fellowship and lived in New York and other places outside the Midwest for nearly two decades, Bellow returned to his hometown in 1963. He lived and wrote in Chicago, where he was a member of the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought until 1993 when he took a job at Boston University.

"The center of his fictional universe was Chicago, where he grew up and spent most of his life, and which he made into the first city of American letters," wrote Mel Gussow and Charles McGrath in Bellow's obituary in *The New York Times*. "Many of his works are set there, and almost all of them have a Midwestern earthiness and brashness."

His Chicago-based novels include *The Adventures of Augie March*, which won the National Book Award for fiction in 1954, and *Humboldt's Gift*, which won the Pulitzer in 1976. "Eventually, Chicago became for him what London was for Dickens and Dublin was for Joyce — the center of both his life and his work," the *Times* stated, "and not just a place or a background but almost a character in its own right."

**Victor de Grazia
James Trainor**

Two aides to former Democratic Illinois Gov. Dan Walker died this spring.

Victor de Grazia, deputy governor and chief strategist for Walker's 1972 upset victory, died April 2. He was 76. Trainor, Walker's director of the Department of Public Aid, died March 28. He was 69. "In campaigns and in running the state, his right-hand man was Victor de Grazia, who was rated as a political genius," wrote Robert P. Howard in *Mostly Good and Competent Men*, published by Center Publications at the University of Illinois at Springfield. "They were better at collecting enemies than rallying supporters."

Among the enemies de Grazia cultivated was Richard J. Daley, who was offended by the Walker strategy of fielding legislative candidates who were opponents of the Chicago mayor's agenda at the state Capitol. De Grazia grew up politically in the anti-machine faction of Democrats. He was a housing activist who worked on Gov. Adlai Stevenson's presidential campaign.

Trainor, a resident of northwest suburban Palatine, instituted changes in his agency that included setting up an office in a Chicago housing development and establishing a system to ensure recipients received assistance payments. He became a hospital consultant after leaving the state agency. Trainor was vice president of Chicago-based Health Marketing Inc. before retiring last year.

Sam Macrane

The former Naperville mayor died March 30. He was 74.

Macrane was a retired tire company executive when he entered local politics in the growing DuPage County suburb. He ran a successful campaign as mayor in 1991 and was serving his third term as councilman at the time of his death.

The city of Naperville credited Macrane with "playing an integral role in the city's growth as its population soared from 88,000 to 139,000 residents."

QUOTABLE

“Somehow, the governor does not see the urgency in these matters, yet is so consumed with a single issue that he is laser-focused on our own family tragedy instead of serving the interests of the 12 million others he is supposed to represent.”

Chicago Ald. Richard Mell, as quoted in the Chicago Sun-Times. In the April 12 story, he complained about his son-in-law's attempt to change state law regulating landfills to prohibit relatives of the governor from deriving "personal financial benefit" from waste-disposal operations. Earlier this year, the governor shut down a landfill operated by a distant relative of Mell's. That triggered an ongoing feud with Mell, who, the newspaper reports, had no financial stake in the landfill. Blagojevich aides told the newspaper the proposal, which was backed by environmental interests, had nothing to do with Mell.

U of C race expert returns

Prominent race researcher **Michael Dawson** will return in July to the University of Chicago, in part because of fallout from controversial comments made by Harvard President **Lawrence Summers**.

Since political scientist Dawson went to Harvard three years ago, several of his African-American studies colleagues there have departed. That includes religion scholar **Cornel West**, who pointed to his displeasure with Summers as his motive, and sociologist **Lawrence Bobo**, with whom Dawson studied the racial divide. Dawson, founder of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture at Chicago, and Bobo are writing a book based on those studies.

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Nominees must be a current appointed official and:

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- Communicated effectively the mission and vision of the office, agency or department.
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- Been a role model to motivate and inspire others.

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- To assist in identifying candidates, please consult a directory of eligible State of Illinois, County of Cook, or City of Chicago departments and agencies located at www.norbic.org.
- Complete the form below and attach a separate sheet with a one- or two-page description of the nominee's achievements.
- Mail to: *Illinois Issues*, University of Illinois at Springfield, One University Plaza, MS HRB 10; Springfield, IL 62703-5407.
- Supporting evidence (such as newspaper articles) is also very helpful to the selection committee.

Deadline for nominations is May 13, 2005 (copies of this form accepted).

The awards luncheon is October 12th, 2005.

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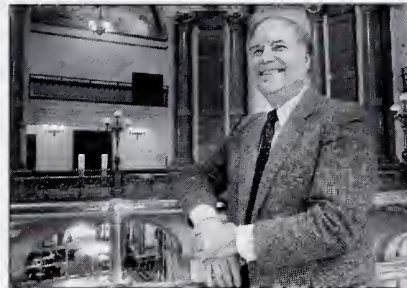
Nominee's phone number (for selection committee use only)

Your address

Your telephone number (include area code)

☐ Check here if you want an invitation to the awards luncheon October 12, 2005.

Charles N. Wheeler III



A consistent "culture of life" would include the span between birth and death

by Charles N. Wheeler III

The passing in recent weeks of Terri Schiavo and Pope John Paul II has helped popularize a new slogan for conservative activists and Republican strategists: "culture of life."

Folks who long have fixated on the first instants of life now seem to have turned their scrutiny to its final moments. That's fine, but usually there's a lot of time between conception and death — scores of years for most of us. So a consistent "culture of life" would include concern for what happens to people during that span, a respect for life and human dignity that's a "seamless garment," in the words of the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin.

In a 1984 address at St. Louis University, the cardinal made clear that such an all-encompassing ethic "does not equate the problem of taking life (through abortion or war) with the problem of promoting human dignity (through humane programs of nutrition, health care and housing)."

But, he added, "a consistent ethic identifies the protection of life and its promotion as moral questions. It argues for a continuum of life that must be sustained in the face of diverse and distinct threats."

Moreover, a consistent ethic of life is rooted in Roman Catholic moral and social tradition, the cardinal noted, a tradition that "joins the humanity of the unborn infant and the humanity of the hungry ... [and] calls for positive legal action to prevent the killing of the

Clearly, the most prominent life issue in the public eye has been abortion, over which battle lines have been drawn for more than 30 years between seemingly intractable camps.

unborn or the aged and positive societal action to provide shelter for the homeless and education for the illiterate."

Clearly, the most prominent life issue in the public eye has been abortion, over which battle lines have been drawn for more than 30 years between seemingly intractable camps. If one accepts the cardinal's imagery of a "seamless garment" ethic of life, though, perhaps there are issues around which the anti-abortion and the abortion rights forces might find common cause.

Consider, for example, the condition of the state's children, among its most vulnerable citizens. In its 2005 *Illinois Kids Count* report, Voices for Illinois Children, a statewide, nonprofit advocacy group, measured the well-being of the state's youngsters in a variety of areas. Released just a few days before the deaths of Ms. Schiavo and the pope, the report focused on a dozen indicators that the coalition believes would improve

learning — and, thus, the future quality of life — for Illinois children. Not all the factors are related directly to classroom quality; home environment, family economic status, health and early childhood experiences have almost equal influence on student achievement, the report noted.

The snapshot the report offers is encouraging, but troubling as well. Gains are documented in many areas, including the availability of early childhood education — double-digit increases in Head Start, prekindergarten and child care enrollments in recent years — and of health insurance — more than 1.1 million children covered by Medicaid or Kid-Care, a 42 percent increase since 1998. Yet thousands of youngsters still have no access to quality preschool programs, and an estimated 11 percent of Illinois kids are still without health insurance.

In other areas, such as reading proficiency and access to after-school programs, little progress has been made, according to the report, while in two key areas — school funding and family economic status — conditions are getting worse.

Illinois rates 49th among the states in terms of the gap in per-pupil spending between wealthy school districts — generally with high property tax bases — and poorer districts with less pricey real estate, the report notes. Moreover, recent increases in state funding guarantees haven't kept pace with inflation, and the current foundation level is almost \$1,000

short per student of the amount needed for a quality education, according to the report.

While school districts struggle financially, so do thousands of Illinois families, the report found, with almost half a million children living in poverty, based on the federal level of \$18,810 for a family of four. The highest child poverty rates — in excess of one out of five kids — are found in a handful of counties near the state's southern tip, counties in which most school districts spend less than the statewide average.

While neither finding should come as a surprise to anyone who has been paying attention, the report underscores the dual threat poverty and underfunded schools pose to the future quality of life for too many Illinois kids.

"Children who grow up poor are more likely to experience a range of troubling outcomes, including developmental delays and learning disabilities," the report notes. "As these children grow older, they are more likely to drop out of school, have babies in their teens and be unemployed." At the same time, "many

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schools across Illinois — in city, suburban and rural districts — are being forced to make tough decisions that compromise the quality of education, including increasing class sizes, laying off teachers, cutting programs such as teacher training, and relying on outdated textbooks and equipment," according to the report.

More than a statistical compendium,

the report also proposes "action steps" to improve children's lot in each category measured. For example, Voices calls for comprehensive school funding reform, including relying on higher income and sales taxes to reduce reliance on property taxes and to provide additional funds for poorer districts.

"To do what is best for children, public policies must focus on moving their families not just into jobs, but out of poverty," the report declares. "That means supporting parents as they get the necessary skills to improve their earnings and boosting the incomes of poor families." Specific recommendations include continued expansion of the FamilyCare program of health insurance coverage for the working poor, and a more generous earned income tax credit.

The report, available online at www-voices4kids.org/illinoiskidscount.htm, should interest anyone who believes — as Cardinal Bernardin did — that the culture of life is a seamless garment. □

Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.



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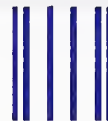
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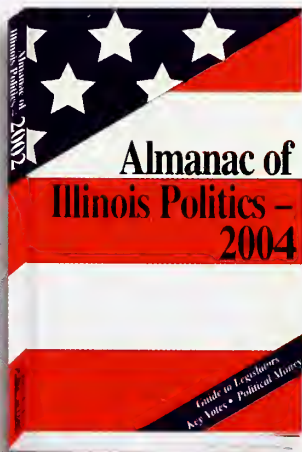


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